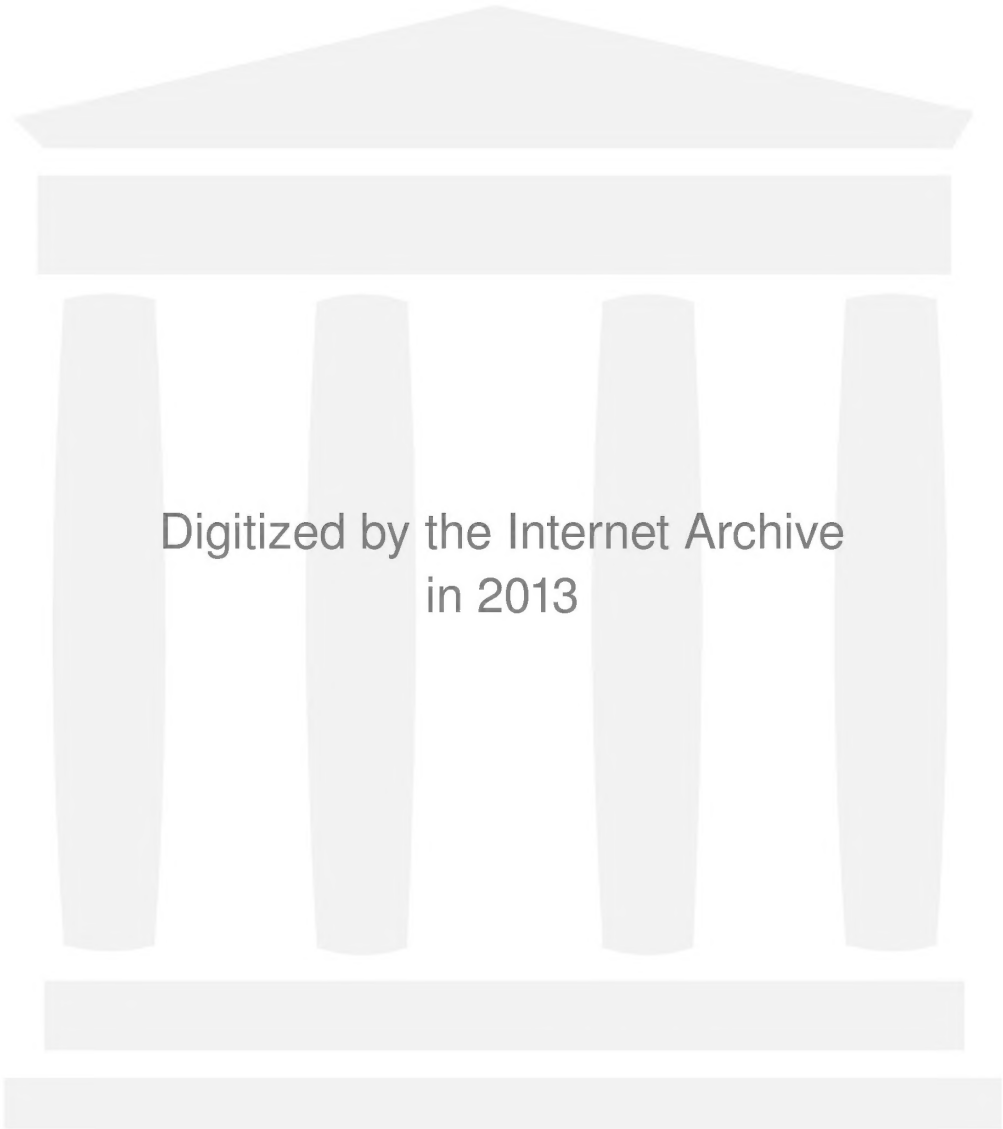
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Penal Code of California
1915, Section 623


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DAVID BERLINSKI: MAN AS ALGORITHM

HARPER'S

HARPER'S MAGAZINE / JANUARY 2000 / $4.95



THE UNFINISHED TWENTIETH CENTURY
What We Have Forgotten About Nuclear Weapons
By Jonathan Schell

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THE SEARCHABLE SOUL
Privacy in the Age of Information Technology
Mark Costello, Michael Moynihan, Ron Sege, Alan Westin

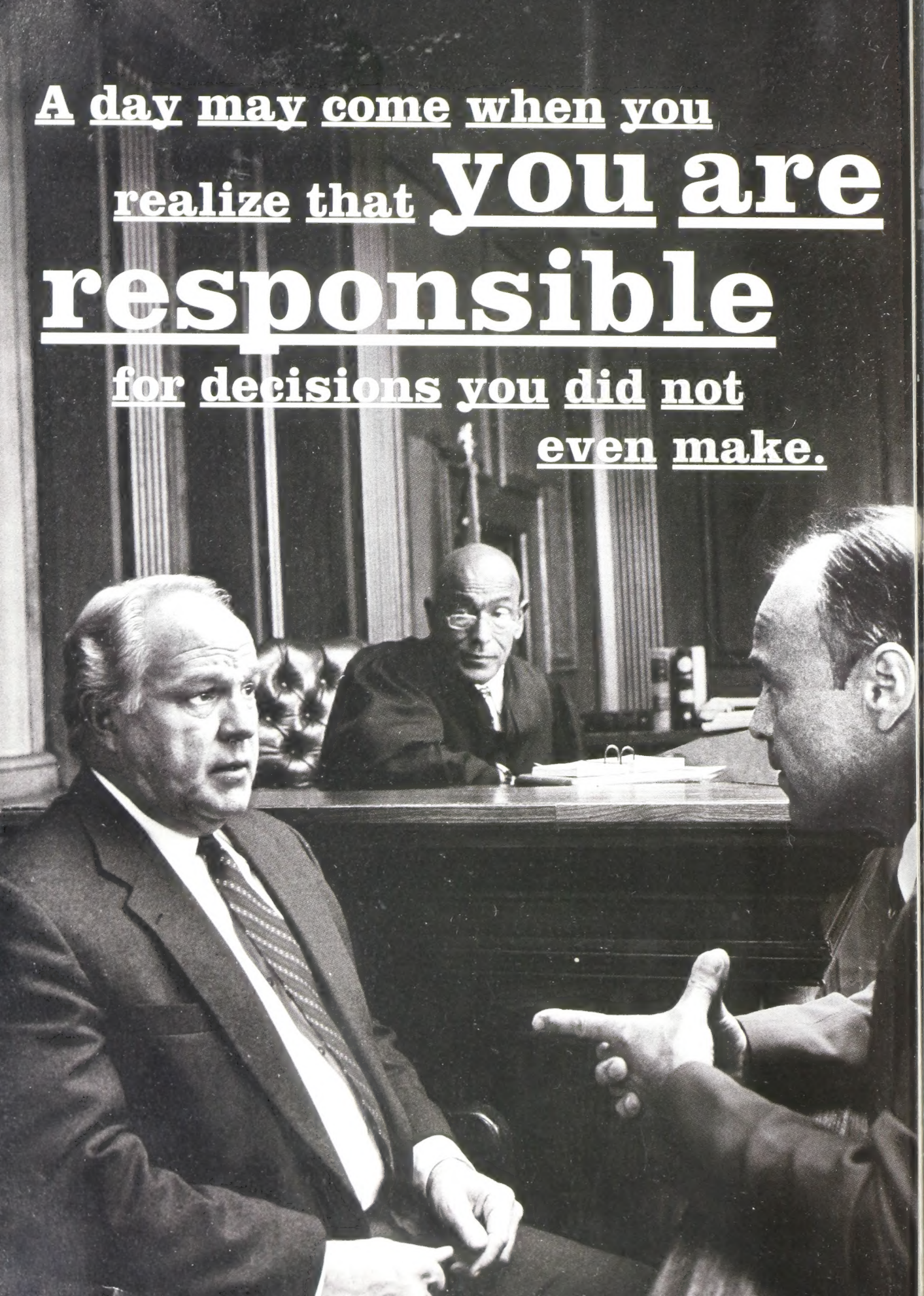
OUR MAN ON CAPRI
Remembering Graham Greene
By Michael Korda

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THE INDEX OF THE MILLENNIUM

Also: Douglas Rushkoff, Les Murray, Will Durant, and Lewis H. Lapham on the Way West

◆


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for decisions you did not
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On location: Lachaise, south of the mountain, Wet, Dry, c. 1888–95 ILLUSTRATION BY TULLIO PERICOLI

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HARPER'S

LETTERS

The Right to Bare Teeth

Daniel Lazare's essay calling for an overhaul of the Constitution to curb gun-related violence ["Your Constitution Is Killing You," October] is a welcome addition to thoughtful debate over gun control, but he stumbles into the National Rifle Association's most successful trap. Not once does Lazare point out that, contrary to popular conception, nowhere in the Second Amendment is the word "gun" mentioned or that the amendment never addresses magazine capacities, barrel calibers, or firing rates. Although the meaning of "arms" has changed little in two centuries, the scope of the definition has expanded far beyond anything the Framers could have imagined. As written, the amendment allows private ownership of machine guns, antiaircraft missiles, hand grenades, nuclear bombs, and nerve gas. Civilian possession of these weapons is banned, yet this has hardly caused a constitutional crisis.

In reality the Second Amendment was overturned, shredded, and trampled long ago. The gun lobby claims to uphold a strict interpretation of the Second Amendment, but it does nothing of the kind. A true believer in that sacred amendment can take one of only two positions: a) the right to bear arms applies to every conceivable weapon, or b) the definition of "arms" must be restricted to weapons that the Framers knew about—muskets, muzzle-loading pistols, and swords.

"Why must Americans remain slaves to the past?" Lazare asks. The answer has nothing to do with the Constitution; it is only our failure to think critically that keeps us enslaved to the self-interested interpretation of a narrow minority.

Peter Gray
Seattle

"Americans tend to give history short shrift," Daniel Lazare writes. Unfortunately, he proves the assertion by ignoring history himself. Attempting to show that the Second Amendment does indeed guarantee the right to bear arms of an individual (as opposed to the people in general, when gathered in an organized militia), Lazare trots out an eclectic array of witnesses: Englishmen Sir Walter Raleigh and James Burgh and the pro–American English radical Richard Price, to name a few. But the world of frontier colonists armed to the teeth is simply fantasy. After an exhaustive study, historian Michael A. Bellesiles found that before the Civil War almost no Americans had guns. If anything, the Second Amendment was added to the

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Constitution for fear that a popularly raised military force would dwindle away for a lack of interest and a lack of guns. At the time of the Revolution, fewer than 15 percent of Americans had firearms—and more than half of those weapons were unworkable. After independence, state legislatures had to pass laws forbidding the mockery of the militia on the annual muster day. Samuel Colt faced bankruptcy because no one wanted his revolver. Even hunting was considered a European aristocratic affectation. The Civil War changed everything, arming the populace and creating the weapons-rich society we have today.

T. J. Stiles
New York City

Although it was refreshing to see a writer acknowledge in a mainstream magazine that the Second Amendment establishes the personal right of gun ownership (a position usually dismissed as the ranting of a "gun nut"), Daniel Lazare's argument that we no longer need guns to protect us from tyranny is ridiculous. Past issues of *Harper's* have featured articles about police brutality, the secret irradiation of medical patients by the military, the growth of the "corrections" segment of the U.S. economy, and the attempt by the U.S. government to restrict the use of encryption. Before Lazare gets too complacent, he should take a look around, at other countries and our own, not to mention the very magazine for which he writes.

Tim Shoudlter
Los Gatos, Calif.

Daniel Lazare tells us that our Constitution is killing us, but the truth is that our entire past is. Along with the Second Amendment's failure to presage our murderous gun culture, could the best of eighteenth-century political and social science be said to account for any of our twentieth-century life-changing revolutions? Genetic engineering is challenging the spiritual myth of life itself. Instant global communication puts into question the viability of discrete nation-states. [illegible] Framers took their [illegible] Industrial Revolution [illegible] have mounted the tall [illegible] at blunt force [illegible] it of mankind?

The [illegible] guns, crime, violence, [illegible] trade, and more is in [illegible] comparison of what is to what was. Americans have blindly embraced the decaying wisdom of the long dead with wistful metaphors of gutsy pioneers and bigger than life Founding Fathers. If we wouldn't stake our lives on eighteenth-century medicine, under what leap of faith do we trust 200-year-old social science to shape our daily lives?

Mark Doneen
San Francisco

I don't believe the Constitution is perfect, but I wonder whom Lazare would choose to write the revision? Scholar statesmen employed by which think tank, funded by which foundation, or endowed by which corporation?

Dave Sams
Fort Myers, Fla.

Daniel Lazare gives a brief history of the "popular" militia, but my understanding is that militias were typically composed of wealthy, white landowners. The "weaker sex" and the oppressed didn't own firearms. In 1999 the availability of handguns is the great equalizer. My handguns ease my mind. I don't worry about the testosterone hulking trend who wants to rape, sodomize, or mutilate me. My Smith & Wesson protects me better than the Constitution, especially since women weren't even acknowledged in the [illegible]

Rebecca Tolley Sch[illegible]
Johnson City, Tenn.

In his de[illegible] Daniel Lazare [illegible] British [illegible] Lexington [illegible] cite the colonists' [illegible] colonists [illegible]



NOTEBOOK

The way West

By Lewis H. Lapham

[illegible] that he was [illegible] prepared to [illegible] ready for such [illegible] to become an American

Daniel Boorstin

On a flight from New York to San Francisco last November the plane crossed the South Platte River at an altitude of 35,000 feet over southern Wyoming, and because it was a clear day I could see the traces of what was once the Oregon Trail. The calendar [illegible] a new century, the mail on the next seat sprouted e-coded messages to Silicon Valley on a laptop computer, and I found myself thinking about the metamorphic character of the American frontier. The old European idea of the frontier suggested something heavy and permanent—a stone wall, a gun emplacement or a fortress. [illegible] to hold [illegible] the movement of people and the passage of time. But in the American West the frontier was always [illegible] and it appeared and went as quickly as an April snow.

[illegible] the [illegible] Platte [illegible] 1858 [illegible] Trail [illegible] mules long, from Independence, Missouri, to Fort Laramie, Wyoming, and the throng of emigrants (men, women, and small children) walked at the pace of their oxen and mules. Having invested their faith in the advertisements for virtual reality on the inside of the horizon—"corn [illegible] as much thick through the stalk and eight feet high . . . clover grows to five feet, covering the hills with a mural hay"—the company of the about-to-be-blessed labored up the long slope to South Pass [illegible] the entire month of July. In the evenings they sang Methodist hymns, and beyond the circle of their campfires they listened to the voices of distant wolves and sometimes to the drunken screamings of the Teton Sioux.

American Airlines Flight 65 made good the same distance in fifteen minutes, the audio channels offering the [illegible] Celine Dion and Garth Brooks, the steward asking if I would like another glass of the Pinot Noir. The gentleman to my left, who looked to be thirty years old and part Asian, [illegible] computer in a leather briefcase and brought out a brochure, handsomely illustrated, that listed the prices [illegible] property on the beach at Aptos.

Most everybody I knew came from points east of the [illegible] nineteenth century acted [illegible] a race for land, for gold, for grass, for water, for the fortune they [illegible] want. [illegible] them [illegible] the next [illegible] in the river valley, nailed [illegible] into the mountains. The wagon trains [illegible] [illegible] elected their [illegible] for a period of no longer than four months, [illegible] [illegible] of the twenty [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] new line of country glimmered on the [illegible] like the hope of tomorrow's [illegible] and the steamboats on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers frequently [illegible] ploded because the passengers placed such a high value on speed that they pressed the captain to force his engines beyond the limits of the boilermaker's art. The prizes fell to the individuals who were shifty and quick, and the rule in effect west of Kansas City was the rule of capture ("Boom and Bust," "Settle and Sell," "Get In, Get Rich, Get Out") that also expresses, then as now, the American proof of salvation.

If the American frontier was about nothing else, it was about the triumph of hope over experience, and if on the way to California or the Willamette Valley the travelers in the 1850s reported great numbers of dead horses and abandoned wagons on the trail, the echo of the hopes that so recently had preceded them lingering in an empty chorus of the scent of flowers on a new grave, they consoled one another with the telling of the great story about the impending admission to Paradise. They had a gift for confusing metaphysics with geography, which was why the land given to the Mormon faithful by the Angel Moroni (a.k.a. "The Kingdom of Deseret") happened to occupy the same map coordinates as the Utah Territory.

The itinerant chroniclers wandering through the nineteenth century trans-Mississippi West composed, ad hoc and intending nothing literary, the serial narrative of the American epic. Across the span of the century they made the passage from the states of wonder to the tasks of conquest to the tricks of memory. During the early years of the expedition the legends of new fortune favored the wayward individ-

ral—the prospector and the fur trader willing to take a chance on the set of a stream or a scent in the wind, the Largeman poling up the Missouri River in the direction of what he noted in his log as "just a little beyond no place." The tone was pastoral, and the first generation of plainsmen took the trouble to learn the Indian languages and prided themselves on their capacity to distinguish between a Comanche and a Cross Ventre. Solitary adventurers subject to fanciful visions started out in one place and ended up in another, never quite knowing how they got there, drifting across the prairie with the tumbleweed until they lodged against a woman, a business opportunity, or a jail.

The land still open to "perilous transmigrations" welcomed the improvisations of William Larimer, born in Pennsylvania in 1809, trying a number of different enterprises (general store, freight service, horse trading, railroads) until he went broke in the depression of 1855 and moved west to the Nebraska Territory. Having lost a fortune making wrong guesses about the likely routes of the Ohio and Pennsylvania railroads, he once again speculated in the buying of prospective railroad lands. Once again, Larimer was misinformed, and after a cold winter on the Platte River, he moved to Omaha. He found the place unpromising, and two years later he moved on to Leavenworth, Kansas, where he soon heard rumors of gold in Colorado. He left immediately, and forty-seven days later he found two dozen cabins under construction on the west side of Cherry Creek. He spent one night in camp, but in the morning, still unsatisfied, he packed some blankets, crossed to the east side of the creek, set up four cottonwood poles, and named the place Denver.

As the course of progress and the pennants of civilization moved steadily west, the cavalry no longer inquired about the names of its enemies. The Indian tribes to whom President Andrew Jackson in 1830 granted the land west of the Mississippi "for as long as grass grows and rivers run" encountered the policy of General William Tecumseh Sherman, commanding the armies of the west in 1870 by way of a reward for his destruction of Atlanta,

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became [illegible] the pioneers of the Indian country a problem in subtraction, supposing they must be "exterminated." The beaver played out in the 1840s, the buffalo in the 1880s, and in the latter years of the century even the circumstances were forgotten except by the mining company, the land trust, the railroad monopoly looking for a safe bet or a one thing. The story was over and told almost before anybody knew what to look for or why they had come [illegible]. In 1893, the year that Frederick Jackson Turner announced the closing of the frontier, Buffalo Bill Cody was presenting his Wild West Show at the Chicago World's Fair as a fabulous tale of an already mythical past.

But maybe not in California. I have been born in San Francisco in 1936. I never learned to draw too careful a distinction between history and myth. The changes brought to pass by the events of the last sixty-odd years have been many and various, but none of them seems to me more remarkable than what hasn't changed, which is the dreaming habit of mind, characteristic of the western emigrant to and still inherent in California, that delights in metaphor and chooses to believe in what isn't there. The future is one and does not quickly [illegible] that attempt to impose on time and history.

[illegible] the time American Architects Hubert Howe Bancroft began his history of the Seven Cities of Cibola, I had painted two or three watercolors and four hundred amateur pictures of the pioneer era. I was fourteen [illegible] and I remember [illegible] Charles Fremont [illegible]. The Great Pathfinder I had read a number of times, and about the travelers accompanying him south into the San Joaquin Valley in 1845

[illegible] from the Sierra a Chinook from the [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] and

tertainment and computer industries but also by way of its enthusiasm for fund swindles, environmental ballot initiatives, sexual experiment, aircraft design, and hybrid vegetables. Nor is it surprising that the state continues to attract adventurous spirits from all points of both the moral and geopolitical compass. The belief that wealth follows from a run of luck fosters among the Californians (in Silicon Valley in 1999 as in the Sacramento Valley in 1849) a willingness to deal the cards, take the chance, entertain the proposition from the gentleman wearing the mismatched boots or the lady with the parrot.

When I was a child in San Francisco the country was at war with Germany and Japan, and I can still see the naval armada, aircraft carriers as well as battleships, riding at anchor in the bay; the civilians in the streets dressed like the characters in a story by Raymond Chandler (the men in hats, the women wearing fur); Alan Ladd was in love with Veronica Lake, a computer was a giant robot in a science fiction novel, San Jose somewhere vaguely south on El Camino Real, a dusty farm town where Mexicans wrapped in blankets dozed in the shade of the eucalyptus trees, and if Herb Caen had been asked to guess what was meant by the word "silicon," he most likely would have said something about an insect repellent or a Chinese tailor who had figured a new way to make silk shirts.

But it comes as no surprise that what was once the busiest port on the Pacific Coast, famous for building ships and handling the heavy cargoes of a distant war, now draws its principal income from the virtual reality made for the tourist trade and the airy illusions that account for the success of the Gap. Like the fortune-bearing gravel found at Sutter's Mill, the microchips mined from an even more miraculous sand make possible another set of magic equations; once again the frontier escapes into the lightness of air, the way into the future a projection in space and time "just a little beyond" no place." ■



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HARPER'S INDEX 2000

More than twenty millennia ago, long after we had assigned numerical values to our fingers, human beings began to keep tallies. Today we can study the lines notched into a 30,000-year-old bone, the clay tokens collected in a 5,000-year-old hollow ball, or the hieroglyphs carved into a 1,200-year-old limestone stela and determine the number of bison a Cro-Magnon hunter once killed, the profits enjoyed by an anonymous Sumerian, or the length of the solar year as reckoned by Mayan priests (365.242 days). As with all artifacts, what such numbers tell us is sometimes unreliable, often arbitrary, always incomplete. We tend to know far more about the scale of war and wealth a thousand years ago—the size of armies and harems, palaces and ships—than we do about poverty and peace; more about men than about women, more about civilizations that kept their ledgers on scrolls or stones than about those that knotted them in strands of rope or scratched them in the dirt. Only recently did nearly everything and everyone begin to count: Not until the eighteenth century did the study of the *state* give rise to the science of *statistics*. No truly standardized unit of measurement existed before France defined the meter, in 1791, as one ten-millionth of a quarter of the earth's meridian. The U.S. Census Bureau had no index of income until the 1940s. Like so much else in this millennium, numbers themselves have increased in number, as well as in scope and scale. Although our ancestors' counting methods and mystical numerologies may now seem primitive, our technology is still "digital," and our faith in the significance of numbers—as excitement over the year

Amount by which it had changed by the year 1700 : +$31

Estimated number of people today who live on less than $30 per month : 1,300,000,000

Estimated number who are enslaved : 27,000,000

Rank of the African king of Mali among 14th-century rulers most noted for their riches by a Majorcan mapmaker : 1

Estimated number of years by which the earliest known African ironwork predates Europe's Iron Age : 1,800

Number of ships that sailed in the first expedition of Cheng Ho, the 15th-century Chinese explorer : 287

Minimum number of countries Cheng Ho visited over the course of his seven voyages : 30

Miles that Leif Eriksson sailed from his father's home in Greenland before "discovering" North America in 985 : 230

Years by which new evidence suggests that the age of the first human migration to the Americas should be increased : 20,000

Percentage of the world's land that was claimed by centralized sovereign governments in 1500 : 21

Percentage today : 91

Number of years after Jews settled in China that they were first allowed to live in Russian territory : 1,045

Months after publishing *The Communist Manifesto* that Karl Marx became editor of a newspaper funded by industrialists : 2

Months' worth of salary lost by Groucho Marx in 1929's stock market crash : 28

Number of U.S. banks in 1921, 1933, and 1999, respectively : 30,456, 14,207, 8,675

Percentage change in the average amount of cloth required to clothe a U.S. woman between 1913 and 1928 : −64

Number of World War I battleships said to have been built from the steel donated by U.S. women from their corsets : 2

Year in which Marie Antoinette convinced France's King Louis XVI to declare that all handkerchiefs be sprinkled : 1785

Percentage of the French government's 1788 expenditures that went to support the court at Versailles : 6

Percentage that were to finance war debt resulting from France's support of the colonies in the American Revolution : 50

Year in which 19th-century U.S. lawmakers rejected outlawing slavery in all future states beyond the original thirteen : 1

Estimated number of anti-slavery petitions sent to Congress between 1835 and 1836 : 500

Fraction by which the Constitution allowed a state to count its slaves when allocating House seats and electoral votes : 3/5

Chance that a New York State resident in 1776 was a slave : 1 in 7

Chance that a New York State African American who is a New York State resident today lives below the poverty level : 1 in 4

[illegible] of state languages added to the Census Bureau Language Program since 1990 : 5

[illegible] Society apologized for trying to thwart Mohandas K. Gandhi's law practice in : [illegible]

Approximate year in which Axum had its first recorded trade-letter with Europe : 1800

Percentage change in the value of India's cotton exports between 1815 and 1837 : −92

[illegible] change in the amount of British cotton products India imported during the same period : +4,5[illegible]

Estimated number of pairs of gloves owned by Elizabeth I : 2,[illegible]

Estimated number of serfs Catherine the Great gave away as gifts : 800,000

[illegible] of ornaments now employed as "serfs" or "wenches" at Medieval Times entertainment complexes in [illegible] : [illegible]

Number of people who have been to space : 392

Number of the universe's spatial dimensions of which physicists now believe we are unaware : 7

Age at which Albert Einstein spoke his first words : 3

Estimated amount lost by Isaac Newton in South Sea stock speculation in the 1720s : $2,000,000

Place of imprisonment and torture undergone by Niccolò Machiavelli after falling out of favor with the Medici in 1513 : 28

Number of years later that his book *The Prince* was published, with a dedication to Lorenzo de' Medici : 13

Factor by which Microsoft's average monthly campaign contribution in 1999 exceeded its monthly contribution in 1995 : 8

Number of the ten largest multinational corporations that produce automobiles or gasoline : 9

Percentage change since 1992 in the number of prison beds in privately owned or managed U.S. prisons : +85%

Year in which the word "homesick" was coined : 1798

Number of years after North America's first library opened in 1638 that it published a subject guide : 152 (see page 360)

Number of years between the invention of the first photocopier technology in 1938 and the first commercial-copier sale : 21

Average annual number of copies produced per American six years later : 52

Number of pages accumulated in the FBI's Sex Deviates file by the time the program was abandoned in 1977 : 330,000

Percentage of Americans who believe that sex education should be a required school subject : 60

Percentage who believe that the teaching of evolution should be required : 28

Number of dodo heads successfully preserved since the birds' extinction in 1638 : 1

Number of the world's 6,000 living languages that are indigenous to Papua New Guinea : 1,000

Percentage change in enrollment in U.S. college-level French and German courses since 1995 : −4.5

Percentage change in enrollment in college-level Arabic and Biblical Hebrew courses : +44.7

Portion of the Islamic world that was controlled by Shiites in 1000 : 1/2

Percentage of Muslims who were Shiites in 1000 and percentage who are Shiites today, respectively : 5, 14

Estimated percentage increase since 1000 in the number of Christians, Muslims, and Hindus, respectively : 2,450, 2,300, 1,225

Estimated percentage increase since then in the number of Buddhists : 4,275

Pounds of armor worn by a European knight in the 11th and 13th centuries, respectively : 71, 90

Chances that one of the 49 armed conflicts fought worldwide since 1990 relied exclusively on small arms : 9 in 10

Hours required to assemble a prefabricated nuclear-bomb shelter, according to a 1961 *Life* magazine cover story : 4

Number of New York City children issued Civil Defense dog tags by 1952 to identify them after a nuclear attack : 2,500,000

Number of false alarms of nuclear missile attacks generated by the U.S. early warning system between 1977 and 1984 : 20,784

Number of U.S. nuclear bombs currently on "high alert" : 2,380

Rank of "shed[ding] my enemies' blood and wring[ing] tears from their women" among Genghis Khan's greatest joys : 1

Rank of "crush[ing] your enemies . . . and hear[ing] the lamentations of the women" among Conan the Barbarian's : 1

Chance that a U.S. woman over the age of 40 made love in her clothes in the 1940s : 1 in 3

Year in which the *New York Times* first reported a "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals" : 1981

Chances that a person who has died of AIDS since then has died in sub-Saharan Africa : 4 in 5

Chance that a 16th-century Aztec was killed by smallpox : 1 in 2

Chance that a 14th-century European was killed by bubonic plague : 1 in 4

Number of pharmacies in the Cambodian city of Angkor Thom in the 13th century : 102

Number of Chinese engineers who accompanied the Mongol Khan Hulagu on his siege of Baghdad in 1257 : 1,000

Year in which China introduced the first paper currency : 1022

Years after Portuguese adventurers brought guns to Japan in 1543 that Japan owned more guns than any other country : 57

Estimated number of Japanese peasant uprisings in the following 268 years under the Tokugawa regime : 3,000

Number of major European peasant revolutions begun between 1809 and 1848 : 8

Number of these that were begun in the name of the Catholic Church or to reinstate a deposed monarch : 7

Number of popes stabbed, strangled, or poisoned to death in the last three decades of the 10th century : 5

Percentage of the 14,000 Bulgar survivors of the 1014 battle at Kleidion who were blinded by the victorious Byzantines : 99

Ratio of the number of U.S. soldiers who died from disease during World War I to those who died in combat : 1:1

Chance that a soldier who died in combat in the 20th century was American : 1 in 72

Chance that a civilian who died in a 20th-century war was American : 1 in 62,000

Projected rank of heart disease and severe depression among the leading causes of death and disability in 2020 : 1, 2

Percentage change since 1930 in the annual U.S. death rate for cancer : +11

Percentage change since then in the U.S. death rate for all cancers except that of the lung : −20

Estimated number of years that Virginia used tobacco as a currency : 200

Acres of hemp grown by "patriotic" U.S. farmers in 1942 at the behest of the U.S. government : 36,000

Estimated number of non-native species that have entered the North American ecosystem since 1500 : 50,000

Inches by which today's forest canopies exceed the height of those grown in Mexico in 1500 : 13

Estimated number of people annually sacrificed to the Aztec rulers of the city of Tenochtitlan by their subjects : 20,000

Pounds of beef consumed daily by the household of the 10th-century count of Cordoba : 13,000

Number of servants in his household : 6,300

Number of wives the sultan claimed to have known in his lifetime : 14

Estimated temperature of Hell : 448°F

Estimated temperature of Heaven : 44°F

Number of times the word "love" appears in the Song of Solomon : 0

Number of times the word "God" appears in the Book of Esther : 0

Estimated number of years it took for the universe to evolve from a primordial fireball to its present state : 10

Factor by which the estimate of the universe's age increased since 1929 : 10



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READINGS

[Essay]

ITERATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

From The Advent of the Algorithm, *by David Berlinski, to be published in March by Harcourt Brace. Berlinski is the author, most recently, of* A Tour of the Calculus.

The calculus and the rich body of mathematical analysis to which it gave rise made modern science possible, but it was the algorithm that made possible the modern world. They are utterly different, these ideas. The calculus serves the imperial vision of mathematical physics. It is a vision in which the real elements of the world are revealed to be its elementary constituents: particles, forces, fields, or even a strange fused combination of space and time. Written in the language of mathematics, a single set of fearfully compressed laws describes their secret nature. The universe that emerges from this description is alien, indifferent to human desires.

The great era of mathematical physics is now over, the 300-year effort to represent the material world in mathematical terms has exhausted itself. The understanding that it was to provide is infinitely closer than it was when Isaac Newton wrote in the late seventeenth century, but it is still infinitely far away. Every man ages as another is born, and if time [illegible] one idea from the field, it does so by weaving another. The algorithm has come to occupy a central place in our imagination. It is the second great scientific idea of the West. There is no third.

An algorithm is an effective procedure—a recipe, a computer program—a way of getting something done in a finite number of [illegible] steps. Classical mathematics contains algorithms for virtually every elementary operation. Over the course of centuries, the complex and counterintuitive) operations of addition, multiplication, subtraction, and division have been subordinated to fixed routines. Arithmetic algorithms now exist in mechanical form, what was once an intellectual artifice has become an instrumental artifact.

The world the algorithm made possible is retrograde in its nature to the world of mathematical physics. Its fundamental theoretical objects are symbols and not atoms, elementary particles, or [illegible] used to explain knot. Algorithms are human artifacts. They belong to the world of memory and meaning, desire and design. The idea of an algorithm [illegible] of [illegible] to be grasped fully, but it was [illegible] [illegible] itself [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

man's soul, it is truth and certainty that remind him of his duty. At the end of the nineteenth century, mathematicians anxious about the foundations of their subject asked themselves why mathematics was true and whether it was certain, and to their alarm discovered that they could not say and did not know. Caught between mathematical crises and their various corrections, logicians were forced to organize a new world to rival the abstract, cunning, and continuous world of the physical sciences, their work to transform the familiar and intuitive but hopelessly unclear concept of the algorithm into one both formal and precise.

Unlike Andrew Wiles, who spent years searching for a proof of Fermat's last theorem, the logicians did not set out to find the concept that they found. They were simply sensitive enough to see what they spotted. We still do not know why mathematics is true and whether it is certain. But we know what we do not know in an immeasurably richer way than we did. And learning this has been a remarkable achievement, among the greatest and least known of the modern era.

Data kisses the continents one after the other, and its tireless series of coded communications hustles itself along the surface of the earth, relayed from point to point by fiber-optic cables, or bouncing in a triangle from the earth to synchronous satellites, serene in the cloudless sky, and back to earth again, the great global network of computers moving chunks of data at the speed of light: stock-market indices, currency prices, gold and silver futures, news of cotton crops, rumors of war, [illegible] tales of sexual scandal, images of men in starched white shirts stabbing at keyboards with stubby fingers or looking upward at luminescent monitors, beads of perspiration on their tensed lips. E-mail flashes from server to server, the circle of affection or adultery closing in an electronic blink, there is no need to [illegible] and bad news in Sweden. There is data everywhere and information on every conceivable topic: the way raisins are made in the Sudan, the [illegible] of the Late Stone Age, [illegible] telephone numbers of dominatrices in Los Angeles, and pictures too. A man may be whipped, scourged, and scoured without ever [illegible] by [illegible] his conscience or his appetites, read widely in French literature, decline verbs in Sanskrit, or scan an interlinear translation of the *Iliad*, discovering the Greek for "greave" or "grieve"; he may [illegible] contact with covens in South Carolina, or exchange messages with people in chat groups [illegible] murdered

on instructions tendered by the House of Windsor, the dark demented devious old Queen herself sending the order that sealed her fate.

All of this is very interesting and very new—indeed, interesting because new—but however much we may feel that our senses are brimming with the debris of data, the causal nexus that has made the modern world extends in a simple line from the idea of an algorithm, as logicians conceived it in the 1930s, directly to the ever present always moving now; and not since the framers of the American Constitution took seriously the idea that all men are created equal has an idea so transformed the material conditions of life, the expectations of the race. It is the algorithm that rules the world itself, insinuating itself into every device and every discussion or diagnosis, offering advice and making decisions, maintaining its presence in every transaction, carrying out dizzying computations, arming and then aiming cruise missiles, bringing the dinosaurs back to life on film, and, like blind Tiresias, foretelling the extinction of the universe either in a cosmic crunch or in one of those flaccid affairs in which after a long time things just peter out.

The algorithm has made the fantastic and artificial world that many of us now inhabit. It also seems to have made much of the natural world, at least that part of it that is alive. The fundamental act of biological creation, the most meaningful of moist mysteries among the great manifold of moist mysteries, is the construction of an organism from a single cell. Look at it backward so that things appear in reverse (I am giving you my own perspective): Viagra discarded, hair returned, skin tightened, that unfortunate marriage zipping backward, teeth uncapped, memories of a radiant young woman running through a field of lilacs, a bicycle with fat tires, skinned knees, Kool-aid and New Hampshire afternoons. But where memory fades in a glimpse of the noonday sun seen from a crib in winter, the biological drama only begins, for the rosy fat and cooing creature loitering at the beginning of the journey, whose existence I'm now inferring, the one improbably responding to *kitchy kitchy coo*, has come into the world as the result of a spectacular nine-month adventure, one beginning with a [illegible] larger than a pinhead and passing by means of repeated but controlled cellular divisions into an organism of ramified and intricately coordinated structures, these held together in systems, the systems in turn animated and controlled by a rich biochemical apparatus, the process of biological creation like no other seen anywhere in the universe, strange but dis-



"Three Pairs," a photograph by London artist Boyd Webb. His work was on display in June at the Govett Brewster Art Gallery in Auckland, New Zealand

armingly familiar, for when the details are stripped away, the revealed miracle seems cognate to miracles of a more familiar kind, as when something is read and understood.

The schedule by which this spectacular nine-month construction is orchestrated lies resident in DNA—and "schedule" is the appropriate word, for while the outcome of the drama is a surprise, the offspring proving to resemble his maternal uncle and his great-aunt (red hair, prominent ears), the process itself proceeds inexorably from one state to the next, and processes of this sort, which are combinatorial (cells divide), finite (it comes to an end in the noble and lovely creature answering to my name), and discrete (cells are cells), would seem to be essentially algorithmic in nature, the algorithm now making and marking its advent within the very bowels of life itself.

DNA is a double helix—this everyone now knows, the image as familiar as Marilyn Monroe—two separate strands linked to one another by a succession of steps, so that the molecule itself looks like an ordinary ladder seen under water, the strands themselves curved and waving. Information is stored on each strand by means of four bases—A, T, G, and C—these secure by nature chemicals, but they function as symbols, the instruments by which a genetic message is conveyed.

A library is in place, one that stores information, and far away, where the organism itself carries on, one sees the purposes to which the information is put, an accessible algorithm ostensibly or heuristic, the entire affair. Meaning is inscribed in molecules, and so there is something that reads and something that is read, but they are those strings richer by far than the richest of novels, for while Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* can only suggest the woman, her black hair swept up in coquetry, the same process can create the woman herself, when read by the right biochemical agencies, and then [illegible]

[Location]

ACCOUTREMENTS OF EMPIRE

From "Atlas: The Work, the Book and the Image" by Robert Smithson at Marian Goodman and William Bunn in the November/December issue of The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists *Document records all detonations of nuclear devices conducted by the United States, Great Britain and France between July 1945 and September 1977. During this period, the height of the Cold War, the United States exploded one thousand, one hundred and seventy-nine nuclear weapons, or 97.6 percent of the total number exploded. Test sites are located on the following islands: Johnston Island, Christmas Island and Enewetak all lie to the south of the Japanese archipelago; Bikini and Eniwetok atolls are in the Marshall Islands; Novaya Zemlya is in the Arctic Ocean; Reggane is in the Algerian Sahara; Lop Nor is in the Chinese province of Sinkiang; Nevada is in the United States; Semipalatinsk is in the Soviet Union; Maralinga is in Australia; Amchitka Island is in the Aleutian chain; Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls are in the Pacific Ocean and comprise the French Polynesian nuclear test site; Emu Field is in Australia; Monte Bello Islands are off the northwest coast of Australia; Novaya Zemlya, Lop Nor and Semipalatinsk all lie to the north of the Japanese archipelago; Reggane is in the Algerian Sahara; Nevada is in the United States



From Topographical Projections, [illegible] by Yoshio [illegible]. [illegible] Washington, D.C.

mel ncholy and exuberant about our culture.

The computer is a machine, and so belongs to the class of things in nature that lack souls or minds, but the computer is also a device dividing itself into aspects, symbols set into software to the left, the hardware needed to read, store, and manipulate the software to the right. This division of labor is unique among man-made artifacts: it suggests the mind immersed within the brain, the soul within the body, the presence anywhere of spirit in matter. An algorithm is thus an ambidextrous artifact, residing at the heart of both artificial and human intelligence. Computer science and the computational theory of mind appeal to precisely the same garden of branching forks to explain what computers do or what men can do or what in the ride of time they have done.

Molecular biology has revealed that whatever else it may be, a living creature is also a combinational system, its organization controlled by a strange hidden [illegible] [illegible] one written in a biochemical code [illegible] gorithm that lies at the [illegible] [illegible] tertwine information [illegible] (the nucleic acids) to another (the proteins).

The complexity of human artifacts [illegible] things that human [illegible] [illegible] planation of human myths [illegible] gence to ponder [illegible] ple [illegible] [illegible] computer [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[Translation]

OWME SWEET OWME

From "Residents Rights & Responsabilities," a pamphlet issued last year to Caribbean tenants by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. HUD withdrew the pamphlet in September after receiving complaints.

Yuh a yuh a rezident, ave di rights ahn di responsabilities to elp mek yuh HUD assisted owme ah behtа owme fi yuh ahn yuh family. Dis brochure briefly liss some aht yuh moos im powtant rights ahn responsabilities fi elp yuh get di moos owt ah yuh owme.

YUH RIGHTS:

• Di right fi get reasonable notice, in writing fi chrin non-emergency inspeckshan aur chrin ah dah entry inna yuh apawtment.

• Di right fi pass materials in common areas fi nat wrong shallah to rezidents. Dem rights ahn also about apportunities aht ow dem caan involve demself in deir projeks.

• Di rights fi recognition by prahpaty ownas ahn manigahs as smady dat ave a seh in rezidenshal community affairs.

• Di right fi equal ahn fair treatment widowt regard to colour, religion, gendah, disability, familial status, national origin, aur age.

YUH RESPONSABILITIES:

• Pey rent fi di correck amount a rent pon a timely basis every month.

• Conduct yuhself in a manner dat wuhdohn disturb yuh neighbahs.

• Nat engagin in criminal aktivity inna di unit, common areas or grounds. Fi yuh unit clean ahn nat litta trash fi room aur common area.

• Fi comply wid local housecode dat affect di chile aur safety aht di rezedence.

Wid dis a mine, dehr are many t ings dat yuh caan do fi elp mek yuh HUD field affice encourage ahn suppowts:

• Promt consideration ahn resolushan aht rezident complaints by ownas ahn manigahs.

• Rezident meetin room ahn pawsh participation in decishans regawding di apawtment building dat dah di wi fi bring aht yuh owme.

If yuh belive dat yuh ave suffahd from discrimnashan aur whud like more infahmashan, call [illegible] aur visit yuh local HUD affice aht Fair Owzing ahn Equal Appatunity.

ganism into existence, control its morphology and development, and ship a copy of themselves into the future.

The transaction hides a process never seen among purely physical objects, one that is characteristic of the world where computers hum and human beings attend to one another. In that world intelligence is always relative to intelligence itself, systems of symbols gaining their point from having their point gained. This is not a paradox. It is simply the way things are. Two hundred years ago the French biologist Charles Bonnet asked for an account of the "mechanics which will preside over the formation of a brain, a heart, a lung, and so many other organs." No account in terms of mechanics is yet available. Information passes from the genome to the organism. Something is given and something read; something ordered and something done. But just who is doing the reading and who is executing the orders, this remains unclear.

[Brainstorm]

HIT CTRL-I FOR INSPIRATION

From "Plots Unlimited," a software product created by writers Tom Sawyer and Arthur David Weingarten. The following is a partial list of the suggested plot conflicts generated by the program that involve a protagonist, Jack, and a stranger, Dave.

In desperate danger, Jack asks a stranger, Dave, for help.

Jack appeals for help to selfish, powerful Dave, who refuses to endanger a major project in order to save Jack's life.

Jack has invited a number of fans to meet Dave, a celebrity. The fans arrive, but Dave doesn't.

Ordinary Jack is mistaken for a celebrity, Dave.

Jack befriends a needy stranger, Dave.

Jack befriends a needy stranger, Dave, who turns out to be a criminal.

Dave leaves Jack to die.

Jack asks a stranger, Dave, to remove handcuffs from his wrists.

Involved in a dangerous search for Dave, Jack finds himself cut off from the outside world.

Jack is taken prisoner by an alien culture and

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[illegible] by Douglas White, Max Charnley, Mel Reservation, [illegible] artist Lance [illegible] Paul Yaxcopoil. The [illegible] Dallas Museum of Art, Museum of Western Art, Paris

[illegible] that the man he [illegible] seeking. Dave [illegible] suspected.

Jack murders a stranger. Dave sees the location [illegible] Dave [illegible] suspects the area. Jack returns home with traces of the soil clinging to his shoes.

Jack discovers a crime Dave wants to hide.

[illegible] crime Dave wants to hide. Jack [illegible] what Jack wants.

Jack [illegible] Dave [illegible] suspected [illegible] Dave [illegible] suspected Dave.

Jack, to help Dave, poses as Dave.

Jack [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

mother-in-law, and for that reason I hit her with a baseball bat.

Because—*porque*. I did it because she was out with another man.

Bedroom—*recámara*. There are weapons hidden in the bedroom.

Body—*cuerpo*. Which part of the body did he hit with the tire iron?

Bottle—*botella*. How many bottles of beer did you drink?

But—*pero*. I want to drink less, but I can't.

Carpet—*alfombra*. Where do these bloodstains on the carpet come from?

Chain—*cadena*. The holdup man was wearing four gold chains on his neck.

Cheer up—*animarse*. Cheer up, you will probably get probation.

Cook—*cocinar*. I was cooking when I heard the shots.

Do—*hacer*. Do me the favor of shutting up.

Drug addict—*drogadicto*. Are you a drug addict?

Drunk—*pisto*. My great-grandfather is drunk.

Drunk, to get—*emborracharse*. I got drunk, and when I arrived home I beat up my old lady.

Fact—*hecho*. The fact is that you hit your husband with the rock.

Frying pan—*sartén*. It's true, my wife hit me on the head with a large frying pan.

Get—*conseguir, obtener*. It is important for you to get a driver's license as soon as possible.

How much?—*¿Cuanto?* How much does the phony work card cost?

Insult—*insultar*. She insulted me, and for that reason I hit her.

Jealous—*celoso*. She shot him because she was jealous.

Mattress—*colchón*. We found a semiautomatic and money under the mattress in your bedroom.

Necessary—*necesario*. It is necessary for you to get plates for your pickup.

Realize—*darse cuenta de*. Did you realize that we found twenty plastic bags of white powder in the closet?

Rib—*costilla*. That drunk hit me in the ribs.

Run down, run over—*atropellar*. The gang member's car ran me over five minutes ago.

Scissors—*tijeras*. My sister attacked me with some scissors.

Screwdriver—*destornillador*. My boyfriend jabbed me in the chest with a screwdriver.

Stab—*apuñalar*. How many times did your sweetheart stab you?

Stain—*mancha*. Why do you have bloodstains on your hands and your clothes?

Television set—*televisor*. My brother-in-law stole my television set.

Throw—*echar*. I stopped you because you threw a woman out of your car.

Tire iron—*[illegible]*
the [illegible]
tires.

Unfaithful—*[illegible]*
the [illegible]
waist.

Whore—*puta*. [illegible]

[Interview]

THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION EATS ITS OWN

From an interview with Douglas Rushkoff [illegible] Technocracy.com. Rushkoff's most recent book, Coercion, published in September by Riverhead Books.

[illegible] Let's talk about the so-called human communications revolution.

[illegible] I prefer to think of our moment as a renaissance rather than a revolution. So many people talk about this computer revolution in terms of the individual user who is empowered to express himself, break down obsolete institutions, or topple the corporate-industrial monoliths. I used to do so myself, but it's an unnecessarily polar and combative vision. And now that we're locked to the idea of empowering individuals, all those individuals start looking a lot more like consumers than citizens or human beings. It devolves quickly into "one-to-one marketing."

I used to think that the acceleration of human action was a great thing. I thought we'd simply bypass our restricting editorial voices, get our superegos out of the way, and behave in that quirky, spontaneous, wonderful fashion that all human beings would behave in if they were not corrupted by social and institutional biases. Until about three years ago, I thought that we should just let technology develop at its own pace. [illegible] However, I was also [illegible] the promises of new media and interactivity. I was willing to [illegible] "connected culture"—or at least for people who sought to use these technologies for thoughtful, post-[illegible] [illegible] the story of how our tightly controlled media was giving

was to create a more natural media space. Media was to be a top-down affair. People like William Randolph Hearst or Rupert Murdoch could make decisions from the upper floors of glass skyscrapers, and their messages would trickle down to the rest of us through the one-way media. But now, thanks to computers and camcorders and the Internet and modems, the media have been forced to incorporate feedback and iteration. I wrote *Media Virus!* to announce that the time had come when we could launch any idea we wanted, that the power was in our hands again. I wrote books about how young people understood media better than adults and were already using it in new, exciting ways.

At the time, I saw everyone who called for us to put on the brakes, or to put new governors on the development of culture, as the enemy of our cultural evolution. Their vigilance would prevent us from reaching the next level of complexity. But something kept nagging at me. I couldn't help thinking that when you eliminate fear and simply follow your bliss, you don't always get the best results. In the worst case, it can even be a recipe for fascism. Over the past few years we just let the Internet go, and we've got an electronic strip mall as a result. We thought government was the enemy, and kept them out of our network. That's what gave market forces free rein. So I started to explore whether there is a way to foster growth, new thought, cultural innovation, and even markets without getting absolutely carried away and losing all sense of purpose.

[illegible]. And you discovered that there was no counterculture.

[illegible]SHKOFF: Yes, I learned that very quickly when I was invited to a convention sponsored by the American Association of Advertising Agencies. They wanted me to talk to them about media viruses and youth culture. I was thrilled. I prepared a talk in which I claimed that advertising was over, that their tyranny over young people had come to an end, that they should give up their coercive ways. When I arrived, there were signs and handouts that read "How to use Media Viruses to Capture New Audiences" and that sort of thing. People were coming up to me and congratulating me for my role in launching controversial Calvin Klein ads that I had nothing to do with. Oh, so I thought.

I suddenly realized that the people who had put my books on bestseller lists were not those [illegible] and Internet homesteaders I so admired but rather the public relations and advertising industries. I had been selling "cool" to corporate America. My books were primers, required texts for [illegible] to take advantage of [illegible] old thing they

[illegible]
NOBODY NEEDS THE WIZ

[illegible] *Ages, Magic Matters* [illegible] *the Beginning, Children of Space, Green and Rhythm* [illegible] 1992 issue of Renaissance Magazine, [illegible] *the last rites and reenactment* [illegible] *Dark Ages and Middle Ages.*

Recently I received some late news from a fellow Mage, Merdwin the Mediocre. Having just obtained my new costume and regalia, I had intended to travel to a Renaissance Faire in my native district only to show myself off in my new threads. Alas, the Mediocre One explained, the Lords of that Faire were toying with the idea of doing away with the Court Wizard altogether! Since then I've learned that several Faires across the country have expressed similar desires.

[illegible] my primate, Ishtesus Dracontinister of Grand High Istari—the seven senior wizards of [illegible] Mages—to defend the existence of Magehood. In the final days of the twentieth century we have witnessed an unprecedented [illegible] disenfranchisement. We [illegible] as an [illegible] attachment to technology is rapidly displacing the simple power to observe the universe from a child's perspective. To me, the Mages at Faire are the last true dispensers and defenders of wisdom, and abandoning the presence of a Mage at Faire means abandoning what's pure and noble in a child's heart.

So next time you visit a Renaissance Faire in [illegible] look for the [illegible] girl staring up at you, wondering why you look [illegible]. Then [illegible] that [illegible] Mages remain part of the Faire. If Wizards and [illegible] Mages will [illegible] Wizard [illegible]



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were born before. That's when I realized that we were in an arms race and that I was just a mouthpiece in a war I knew nothing about. So I spent two years taking a look at many different styles of persuasion, their histories, and how these techniques have been retooled for modern times. I concluded that most of them are based on a simple phenomenon known as regression and transference. It's used in a positive way by therapists, and in a dangerous way by salespeople and marketers. Basically, if people can be made to feel dependent or helpless, they will seek out someone to act as a parent. When people are confused, they want parents who can tell them what to do and reassure them. Once you create a situation where people feel that they can trust you, that you understand them, that you'll take care of them, or that you'll lead them, they will submit.

The other main set of techniques that is being used in coercion today is taken from neurolinguistic programming. They are really just simple hypnosis techniques, such as Milton Erickson's "pacing and leading." If you're sitting in a room with someone, what you would do is subtly assume the same position as your target and adopt some of the same breathing and speech patterns—that's pacing. Then, amazingly, you can slowly lead the person by changing your posture, breathing rate, or speech pattern. Your subject will change his posture too, to conform to yours. Then you begin to work on his thinking.

The same techniques play out in the sales world through the sciences of demographics and target marketing. You pace your target market and listen to its language. To pace the target demographic, the marketer studies buying motives and propensities through focus groups, then creates messages that perfectly reflect the groups' existing emotional states. Marketers pace our behaviors and feelings in order to lead us where they want us to go. When this process gets automated through technologies like the World Wide Web, we're no longer [illegible] in what order? Where did he click? When did [illegible] in then dynamically reconfigure itself to pace each individual exactly. Meanwhile, [illegible]

called sticky Web sites are really just trying to create an inexorable pull on the user toward greater and greater interaction with and loyalty to the particular brand being offered. The user is a fly, and the branded Web site is the flypaper. In a sense, nothing has changed; the same techniques that emperors, kings, popes, and priests have used for centuries are now in the service of corporations. What's different is that we now have technologies in place that make these coercive techniques automatic.

[Platforms]

SING FOR YOUR SINECURE

From "electoral statements" submitted in November by hereditary peers who wished to remain members of Britain's House of Lords. As part of a "radical" plan to reform Parliament, Prime Minister Tony Blair has called for the elimination of all 750 hereditary members of the 1,330-member upper chamber. Although the final shape of the chamber has yet to be decided, all but ninety-two hereditary seats were eliminated in November. Candidates for the remaining seats were asked to write an election statement of not more than seventy-five words.

[illegible] (CONSERVATIVE)

By the living God who made me, but I love this country. My father fought for her all his life, and I, too, have worn her colours with pride. If it is given to me to remain in your Lordships' House I will struggle with all I have to offer. For her democracy, her integrity, her unity, her sovereignty, her independence, her self-government, her crown, and the rights and ancient freedoms of her people.

[illegible]

Since I succeeded, in [illegible], I have tried to serve my Country, the House of Lords, and the Conservative Party. It would be as inglorious to proclaim a personal manifesto as it would be irrelevant to list any achievement. I therefore hope that my fellow peers will honour me with their votes on account of their knowledge of my endeavours.

[illegible]

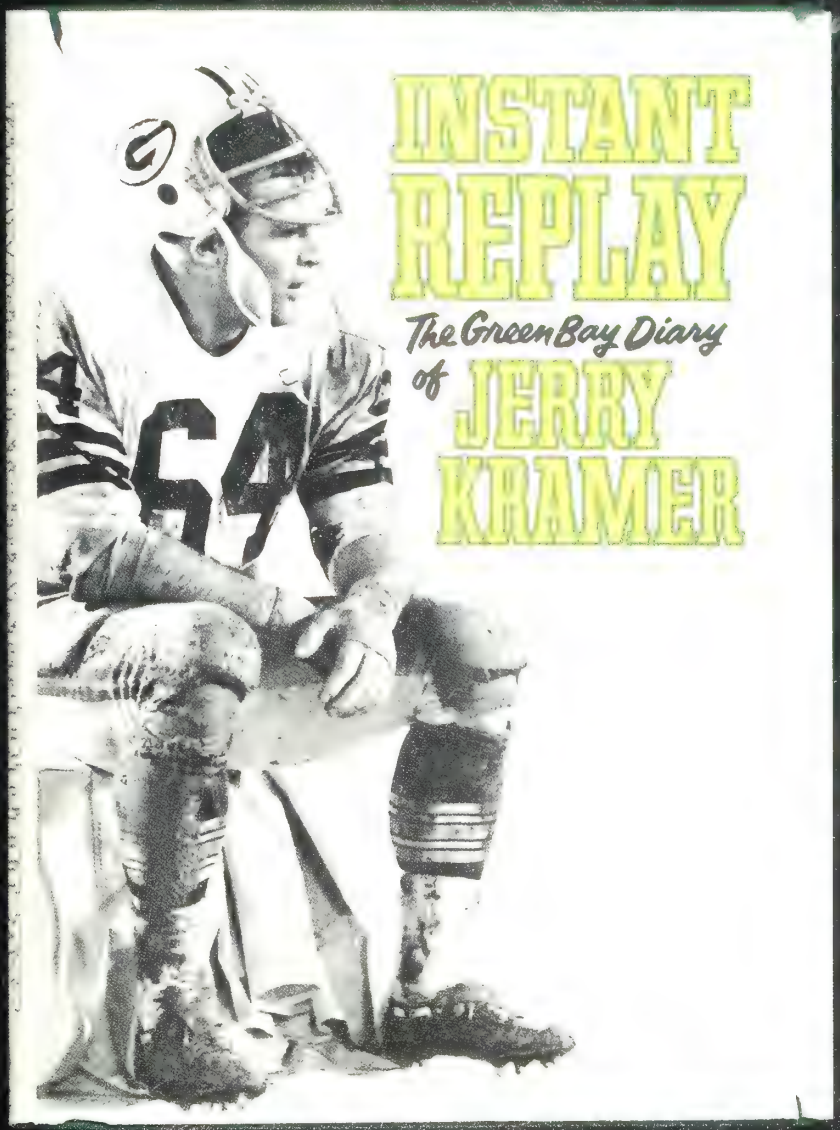
Chairman of the Refreshment Subcommittee, 1997–present

Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Jazz Group, 1996–present

Practicing Dental Surgeon, 1966–present

Band leader, 1964–present

Jan. 19, 1970. Mom accidentally donates to church book drive.



Nov. 30, 1999. Mom redeems herself on Alibris for son's 40th birthday.

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Since taking an active role in the House, I have elevated myself to sport. Through sport, interparliamentary party barriers are broken down. Through sport, international friendships are consolidated. I offer myself as a sporting diplomat-cum-diplomatic sport.

Too early to throw in the towel.

The United Kingdom, not a Disunited Republic. Action against cruelty to animals, particularly fishing with rods. All cats to be muzzled and [illegible] and small birds. There should be more Grammar Schools and not fewer. LEVEL UP not level down, God willing.

spirit as I would have accepted call-up in times of war. Had I wanted to stand for election, I would have tried another place, long ago.

BARONESS STRANGE (CROSS-BENCH)

6 children, 51/2 grandchildren. Writes Lords Diary. Brings flowers. Loves House of Lords. Passionate about War Widows, the Services, Scotland, children, animals, defence, elderly.

The THIRD REICH was defeated largely through the strategic planning of Sir Winston Churchill and the Viscount Alanbrooke. Alanbrooke was awarded a HEREDITARY Peerage in 1946. His massive contribution to the conduct of [illegible] be respected by ensuring that the Honour conferred on him by Monarch and People should be maintained in the [illegible] intended to perpetuity.

LAFORD (CONSERVATIVE)

Whilst being a newcomer and unknown quantity in your Lordships' House, I would gladly [illegible] conservatism in the defence of that which is good. Being a small and happy

bison farmer with aspirations above his station has not yet been a bar to energetic service of Country and Sovereign through an independent chamber. *Si fractum non sit, nolid ectus*.

EARL OF SELKIRK (CROSSBENCH)

Now strike the canvass note again
A louder yet and yet a louder strain
Break their bands of sleep asunder
And rouse them like a rattling peal of thunder

Blair seized the manifesto with a zeal to destroy;
Jay led the way
To light him to his prey,
And like another Helen fired:
a perfectly good, expert, hereditary,
working revising chamber of which
I could proudly remain a member.

LORD HAPPER (CONSERVATIVE)

I have attended the House of Lords on almost every sitting day since 1991 and have rarely missed an important vote. I have almost always voted with the Conservative line except on one or two occasions when they were clearly wrong! I have always been interested in politics.

LORD HENLEY (CONSERVATIVE)

"DUTY"

LORD HOWARD (CONSERVATIVE)

Thirty-plus years' presence in House; assiduous attendance. Conservative principles, but independent-minded. Presently, Science & Technology Select Committee. Previously, Dangerous Dogs Legislation Amendment Committee. Married 37 years.

EARL OF HOUGHTON (CROSSBENCH)

My photographic work brings me into contact with people of all backgrounds, both urban and rural; country issues are particularly close to my heart. Whilst doing my book *Inside the House of Lords* I developed a deep love for Your Lordships' House, and as a cross-bencher I can make judgments without ulterior motives or hidden agenda.

LORD JAFFRAY (LIBERAL DEMOCRAT)

Full-time Member; Buddhist; cyclist; paterfamilias.

Interests: Penal reform, religion in prisons, racial equality, Gypsies, asylum, better government, baroque music, opera, history, WWW, Angulimala.

EARL OF LICHFIELD (CROSSBENCH)

HRH the Prince of Wales stated, "I will become the defender of (all) faiths." Personal, but strongly traditional beliefs passed down the generations without tampering or change. Our nation is one spiritual family, each [illegible] in its own individual traditions.

[illegible]
Is nothing sacred?

[Commendam Virtue]

NOW SIRING: INQUIRE WITHIN

From a list of future progeny of the Lords Howard of Chalke (a sporting bard in Powys) and Jay of Ewelme (a statistician)

Ancestry: Mainly British.
General appearance: Attractive, regular features. High forehead. Looks the "proper British gentleman." Tall, slender, and muscular.
Personality: Warm and persevering. Great with children and animals. Well-balanced introvert/extrovert with broad interests.
Achievements: A distinguished economist whose work has been original and influential. Published in three different fields.
Music: Loves music.
Athletics: Coordination average; stamina excellent.
Offspring: Strong in mathematics and graphics, tending to look like one another. Mothers of his twenty-seven offspring report them to be exceptionally happy babies.
Summary: Tall, innovative, and Rh-negative.

Ancestry: Northern European.
General appearance: Very handsome, "movie star" face. Well proportioned. Full lips.
Personality: Quietly charismatic. Slightly extroverted. Enjoys running, photography, tennis, and reading.
Achievements: Professor of chemistry who has achieved international recognition in his field, with over 200 published papers.
Music: Proficient amateur.
Athletics: Excellent stamina.
Offspring: Our most prolific donor, with thirty-seven offspring around the world. Invariably bright, musical, and athletic, they tend to look like their mothers with the donor's full lips.
Defect: Myopia. Manic chin tic (quiver) when stressed.
Summary: Bright, productive, and handsome.

Ancestry: Mainly British, part Cherokee.
General appearance: Very handsome, "leading man" face, with high cheekbones and strong dimpled chin. Slim, athletic build.

distance runner

athium to control bipolar dis-

INVESTING IN MUTUAL FUN

T

your desires to the good spirits regarding the

clothes. Take your time. Gently stroke, kiss,

the moment. When you are both fully aroused, sex should begin, face-to-face, with

the woman seated on top of him. Both parties should refrain from orgasm as long as possible. The longer you can both hold off the orgasm,

your attention back to the stock. Repeat the

gin to rock back and forth. Take your time and get a good visual picture of where you

repeat the phrase, "I want [symbol] to go up. I want [symbol] to go up." Allow the energy to build. Meditate on the company. Reflect on all you have learned about the company.

quadrupling. Continue to rock back and

in your mind's eye the stock price soaring. Witness the stock climbing higher, higher,

er being released.

BAD BOY

From

F

line between my father's brutality and my

ern Illinois. My mother taught grade

and also helped my father with his

is born he lost

rn picker.

BOOK H LF



A CAREERIST'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS, STATUS AND SELF-CONGRATULATION

Lewis H. Lapham, impudent, serious-minded advice for those seeking the trappings of accolades and the freedom to comment. Includes Clever and arduous tips on the Rich to follow. **Cloth, $19.95.**

THE IMPERIAL GLOBAL ECONOMY EXPLAINS ITSELF TO THE MEMBER SHIP IN DAVOS, SWITZERLAND

[illegible] **Cloth, $15.00.**



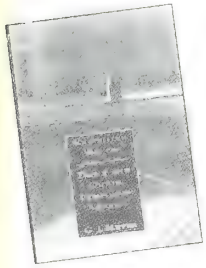
CENSORSHIP AND PROPAGANDA IN THE GULF WAR

Harper's publisher John R. MacArthur reveals how the news was used to promote a humanitarian war in the Persian Gulf. 1993 Mencken Award finalist. Foreword by Ben H. Bagdikian. **Paper, $10.00.**

HOW THE MEDIA INVENTED WHITEWATER

[illegible] out of control. **Paper, $9.95.**

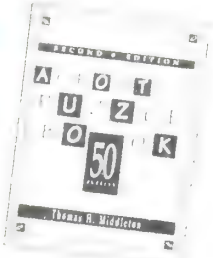


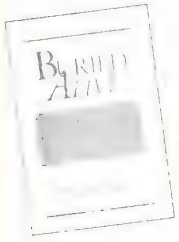


DOWN AND OUT IN CORPORATE AMERICA

Ed Mayer recounts his downhill journey in the boom-corporate age — resulting in his publication. Named the best business [illegible] **Cloth, $14.00.**

[illegible] **Paper, $8.00.**





A collection of [illegible] **Cloth, $12.00.**

[illegible] **Paper, 14.95.**



And Miss Kate spoke in a voice that could barely contain the satisfaction it gave her to say these words to my mother: "What a bad boy. What a bad, bad boy."

At home, my father was working in the soybean field along our lane, and soon after Miss Kate had gone he drove his tractor to the house to see why my mother and I had come back early.

"Something about Santa Claus and an ax," my mother said. "Some of the older boys teasing him, I suspect." We were sitting on the couch, and she had her arm around me. "I think this little boy is just tired. Too much excitement for one day. He's worn to a frazzle."

I started to cry again, in part because the boys had made me a fool and also because, in front of my father, I was ashamed that I had been afraid in the first place. Whenever I looked at the prostheses he wore—the curved steel prongs he could open by contracting the muscles in his shoulders—I imagined I had no right to fear or pain. He had stood with his hands caught between the corn picker's rollers, devices that were similar to the rollers of a wringer washing machine, only studded with hard rubber fingers. He had been trying to clear corn from the picker's shucking box without first shutting off the tractor when the rollers had pulled in first one hand, then the other. He had stood there, each turn of the rollers mangling his hands more and more, until another farmer driving past the field heard his cries for help.

"Little shits." He banged his hooks together. "Probably some of those fox chasers' boys. Someone ought to slit their bags and run their peckers through them."

My father had been a crude talker all his life, and even his marriage to my mother, a woman who used no oath stronger than "fiddle," hadn't changed him. Nor had fatherhood. "Roy," my mother said, her voice low with warning—but of course it was too late. I had heard. *Slit your bag. Run your pecker through it.* That's what I would tell the next boy who lied to me.

"You should see those soybeans." My father stood at the screen door and looked off down the lane. The gentle roll of a hill leveled just past a thicket of blackberry briars and hickory trees, and there, stretching out to the horizon, was the green of the soybean field, the plants ankle-high and just starting to claim a purchase in the clay soil my father had plowed and disked and harrowed. "Those goddamn dogs have been through there. They've trampled a swath." He turned and pointed a hook at me. "Now stop that bawling or I'll give you something to cry about."

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**But read this ad for an even better deal!*

A spyglass in the great naval tradition...

Adm. Nelson's Telescope™ (with table tripod) just $59.95*



When Horatio Nelson fought the battle of Trafalgar, he used a telescope just like this to monitor the movements of the French-Spanish fleet. Our manufacturer has created a faithful replica of this famous scope. *Admiral Nelson's Telescope™* measures about five inches in its "collapsed" position. When you extend the four sections to full length, the scope will be thirteen inches long and focused to infinity with needle sharpness. Everything will appear twenty-five times larger than it would to the naked eye. Compare that to standard binoculars which give you only 6x or 8x magnification. If you have ever wanted to own a fine telescope, but found prices a little steep, *Admiral Nelson's Telescope* should be your choice. You'll get many years of good use and enjoyment from it. ***Admiral Nelson's Telescope™* #1069F320a**

• The optics of Admiral Nelson's Telescope are 25x30, which means 25x magnification and the great light gathering capacity of a 30-mm objective lens. Admiral Nelson's telescope was made of brass. This replica is heavily chrome plated for extra beauty and protection. The scope comes with a belt-looped carrying case for permanent mounting, the scope comes with an extendible table tripod

Make the outdoors enjoyable; zap the flying insects, with...

Electronic Bug Killer just $39.*



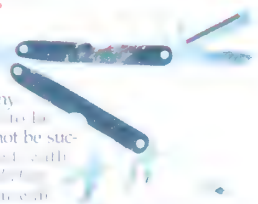
Few things can be more annoying than having mosquitoes, dragon flies, bees, and other flying insects buzzing around your picnic or barbecue and stinging you and your guests. Slapping at them is a losing game. But we all know that light attracts insects; fluorescent light is irresistible to them. The *Electronic Bug Killer™* is equipped with one fluorescent tube and is backed by a mirrored surface. Flying bugs from fifty feet around will "attack" it, rather than you and your guests. The innocent looking background is a high-voltage zapping grid, where those flying annoyances are instantly and mercifully electrocuted. Their charred little bodies can easily and cleanly be removed.

We import these outstanding units in large quantities and are therefore able to bring them to you for just $39.95. Wherever you are bothered by flying insects – camp, deck, kitchen, backyard, or anyplace else – *Electronic Bug Killer™* will quickly take care of them. Make the outdoors enjoyable again and order this outstandingly effective device today! ***Electronic Bug Killer™* #1084F320b**

• Electronic Bug Killer

Solve any problem, do any repair, with...

Scoutmaster™ MultiTool only $39.95*



There [illegible] any contingency, anything that needs to be repaired, that cannot be successfully handled with *Scoutmaster™ MultiTool*. Unfold it and you can have eleven independent tools at your fingertips. First there are the precision needle-nose pliers, with included wire-strippers and sidecutter blades. The handles contain a razor-sharp three-inch knife, spring-loaded scissors, screwdriver (Phillips and standard), saw, file, ruler, bottle opener, awl, and more. Fold it all together and it makes a neat package just 5 x 1.5, which fits snugly in its nylon belt-looped case.

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Now keep cool and comfortable all year round, with...

Porta/Breeze Dual-Power Fan only $29.95*



In the stifling heat of summer or in the heavy air of a crowded room, you will get wonderful relief with the *Porta/Breeze Dual-Power Fan™*. This delightful and very effective appliance measures just 6 x 7 inches, but contains an unbelievably powerful fan, which can be regulated from the softest breeze to a veritable hurricane. To top it off, a bright reading light is provided in the frame of the fan. It can be turned off when not required.

We import this attractive and useful home/office accessory in very large quantities and are therefore able to bring it to you for just $29.95. No need to swelter or to breathe stale air. Stay cool and comfortable with *Porta/Breeze Dual-Power Fan™*. Order it today! ***Porta/Breeze Dual-Power Fan™* #1083F320d**

• Porta/Breeze Dual-Power Fan

Increase your hearing range by a factor of 10x and get top-notch FM stereo reception besides, with...

PowerVox VII™ (Hearing Mate) only $49.95*



The instruction [illegible] PowerVox VII (Hearing Mate) caution you to have the control on "very low" when you first try it, because this instrument is truly amazing in its sound amplification – up to 10 times the actual level. You will be able to hear a pin drop 10 feet away, believe me. The movie and the theater after without any trouble, and every little sound in your surroundings. A wall through the wood will let you listen to bird deer, squirrel, and even little newly hatched baby birds. Listen to the sound of people! Simply push the blue button and you can choose one of 16 FM talent preset audio settings for [illegible] fidelity. [illegible] pocket-sized unit with [illegible] AAA batteries. *PowerVox VII (Hearing Mate)* **#1076F320e**

• PowerVox VII (Hearing Mate)

Never let a dead car battery stall you again—go with...

Car Starter II only $49.95*



The [illegible] sickening [illegible] of a dead car battery is the most discouraging sound a motorist can hear. You are stranded – sometimes for hours or in danger in your neighborhood – or are dependent on the kindness of strangers who might not even have jumper cables. And you know how dangerous jumper cables and strangers can be.

This can never happen to you with *Car Starter II*, a portable power source that will charge your car battery in 1 minute or less just by plugging it into your cigarette lighter. After use, you can recharge the unit again right through that same cigarette lighter. And that's not all. You can also use it to operate lights and all 12-volt appliances, such as small TV sets, up to cassette portables, and even [illegible] up to 150 watts. [illegible]

Don't ever again worry about a dead battery, just attach the convenient, unbreakable [illegible] to your loved one and order yours today! *Car Starter II* **#1080F320f**

[illegible] Car Starter II

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COOLONGOLOOK TIMBER MILL

The poem also appears in Murray's Learning Hu-

!

I was born in a house
with broken windows
in a room whose rusty hair

I knew

the voice of Mabel Lush
to punk

and the Enemy

I

!

Sometimes I

!

I

!

I

!



[illegible] first prize at the Putnam Grange Fair

us. On occasion, as the two of us stood in the pickup truck, he would sing the old hymn "Rescue the Perishing," and his wood lungs rescued me with his reverent voice, his earnest plea for salvation. Once he tried to mow the lawn in front yard, slipped on the wet grass, and fell on his back. I felt guilty because I was a high-spirited boy, an only child, who commanded his attention. I had come into the middle of his life at a time when he hadn't planned ever to be a father. Then he had lost his hands, and with them his patience.

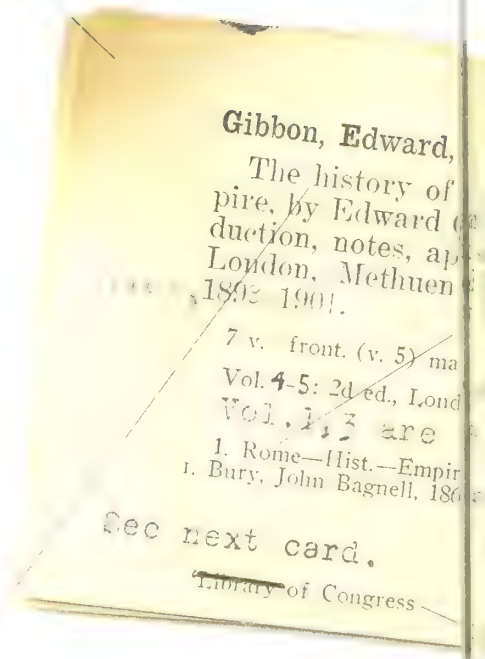
And there I was, a brassy child [illegible] born and strong-willed and [illegible] woman given to temper, a farmer who for years had cut trees, [illegible] every day. If he wanted to move a [illegible] trating chute, he hit it with a cane; it he [illegible] to bring a cow up [illegible] truck, he hooked it with [illegible] reckless with his hooks. He used [illegible] mer on rusted nuts, pry out cotter [illegible] planter chains to their cogs. He no longer had hands, he had tools. Whatever resisted him, he forced to obey.

I lay on the couch a long time after he [illegible] and back to the field, letting my [illegible] him for a while. Then I told myself that I would be better so he could be better and we both could be happy. I went to sleep, and [illegible] woke that evening, I had come on. Piece by piece, the world [illegible] to me. I heard my mother [illegible] hymns in the [illegible] mottled the [illegible] in the mated [illegible] gutter [illegible] patterned and then went quiet [illegible] I came into the [illegible] [illegible] were [illegible] on our maple tree. The [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

LOST IN

The decline and fall of the

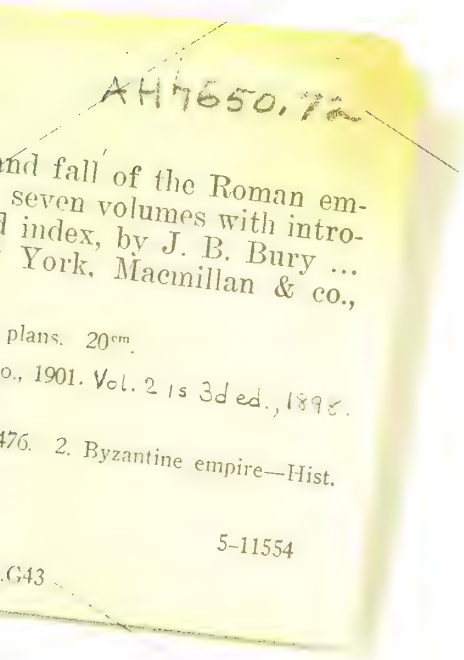
This card, now housed in Harvard's Widener Library, was replaced by an electronic record in the university's online catalog. In his essay "Discards" (collected in *The Size of Thought* [PS3551.A4325 S6 1996], Nicholson Baker imagines the digital catalog as a monstrous, tentacular database with the capacity to turn even the coolest of library patrons into a gibbering fool. He extolls the relative virtues of the card catalog—that elegant labor of generations of librarians—eulogizing, among other things, the palimpsests of fingertip smudges, such as those on this card. Earlier in this century, however, some perceived the newfangled card catalog itself to be but an instrument of automation, menacing in its size and esoteric in its taxonomies. In 1917 the librarian Edmund Lester Pearson described the scene he observed taking place amidst "these cabinets of drawers": "Dozens of harrowed individuals are seen trying to think whether the name of Thomas De Quincey will be found in the drawer marked De or that labelled Qu. Then they make the choice—always wrong—and are seen, with pain only too apparent on their brows, dashing off to the other drawer." Much like our own anxieties in this digital age, Pearson's frustrations may have had less to do with the baffling complexity of the catalogs than with the metaphysical implications of the universal library, which takes as its mandate the acquisition, organization, and preservation of a representative inventory of information, within which knowledge may or may not link.



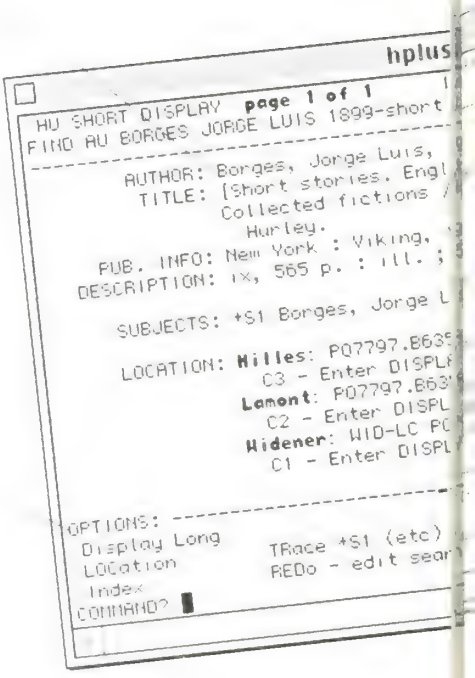
Of the many libraries taken in conquest throughout Europe, Asia Minor, and Antiquity's most famous burned repository, at Alexandria, furnishes the present-day research library with its origin myth. The Ptolemies founded their Alexandrian libraries (there were two of them, burned at various times by various hands) as models of the Greek universe. Callimachus, the first Alexandrian bibliographer, compiled the *Pinakes*, a catalog listing [illegible] in 120 book-length volumes an index of the entire literary output of the Hellenic world. But Alexandria's universal program eventually buckled beneath the weight of some 500,000 papyrus scrolls. Callimachus's successors gradually [illegible] to more selective lists [illegible] which established the great authors in the various genres and exiled less Parnassian writers to obscurity. [illegible] In medieval Europe only ecclesiastical works were regularly copied and preserved. Works by Horace, Ovid, and Cicero [illegible] Both more practical and more astounding, the greatest lesson [illegible] Western [illegible] Gutenberg [illegible] Bibliography.

E STACKS

l library, *by Matthew Battles*



Matthew Battles is at work on H
Thoreau to Typhoon and Harper's Magazine



As libraries expand their uses of digital technology beyond their

, notions like "library" and "book" risk becoming handy, albeit quaint, metaphors. Internet start-up netLibrary, for instance, offers a collection of Web-based "eBooks" that patrons may access and "borrow." And yet a yearning for books persists. That "information scientists" call their databases digital "objects" betrays a nostalgia for the heft and

themselves are daily transubstantiated into shimmering, parchment-colored arrays of pixels and light. Digital objects do have

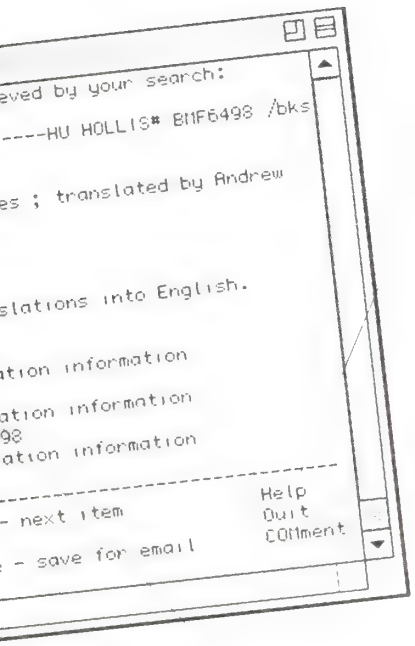
durable than the moldering codices of old. The compact discs and

at an astonishing rate. Meanwhile, the software we use to encode

will not future historians be as concerned to preserve the "trail of bodies of extinct computers, extinct storage media, extinct ap-

code our programmers mean to make invisible? Will they not re-

turn words like "database" and "digital" into metaphors? Almost certainly they will. The digital objects of today are the mcmahl


eved by your search:
----HU HOLLIS# BNF6498 /bks
es ; translated by Andrew
slations into English.
ation information
ation information
98
ation information
- next item
- save for email
Help
Quit
COMment

THE
CO_2
ISSUE

expensive (but flawed and flux-adjusted) comput
models that incorporate a tainted ground-base
temperature record. Fortunately, satellite readin
bolstered by weather balloon radiosondes ar
analysis of marine nighttime temperature show
this vision of apocalypse is flawed. The biosphere
more productive and there is little detectab
warming save for moderate nighttime, winter warming
northern latitudes.

"It ain't over till it's over," Yogi also said. Informed citizen
acting out of enlightened self-interest can stop the rush
UN regulation of all fossil fuel production and us
Optimists' voices must be heard. Our information is availab
on line. Call us toll-free and we'll send you our brochu
The CO_2 Issue. Greening Earth Society is funded by con
sumer-owned utility companies, concerned citizens, ar
Western Fuels Association.

"Who are you going to believe? Me or your own lying eyes?" Richard
Clinton Administration and
mmental community seek to convince you it
governments to tax, cap and constrain
human industrial evolution because of CO_2 emissions.

is a negative vision rooted in sophisticated and

YOU CAN OBSERVE A LOT JUST BY WATCHING: YOGI BERRA



THE UNFINISHED TWENTIETH CENTURY

WHAT WE HAVE FORGOTTEN ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

By Jonathan Schell

A TALE OF THREE AUGUSTS

An age ended [illegible] when the Berlin Wall fell [illegible] the dissolution of the Soviet Union. But which age was it? The Cold War was over — that much was clear. Yet many felt and understood that some longer historical period — perhaps several, had also come [illegible] candidate is the age of totalitarianism [illegible] extensive with the lives [illegible] bracketed the rise and fall [illegible] na's current government, which has evolved into a strange hybrid that some are calling "market communism," is the only one of the great totalitarian states of the twentieth century that [illegible] actually been overthrown.) Another candidate is the age of world wars [illegible] war that remained [illegible] winnable and therefore unlikely by the invention of nuclear weapons. [illegible] two world wars and the two great totalitarian regimes are considered together, they form a third candidate [illegible] calling the "short twentieth century." The calendar's divisions of the years, they've observed, match up inexactly with history's turning points. According to [illegible] teenth century began not in 1800 but in 1789, with the French Revolution, and [illegible] close not in 1900 but in 1914, when the First World War broke out, putting an end to the so-called long nineteenth century. The twentieth century, having begun in August of 1914 [illegible] only until the failed hard-line Communist coup [illegible] the Soviet collapse. Some years before, the Russian [illegible]

[illegible] the twentieth century — the twentieth century [illegible] that [illegible] the world the historians are now saying, by turning out to be short [illegible] predominantly liberal civilization. A bolder assertion [illegible] market [illegible] them, possess a definite historical coherence — that they constitute, to put it simply, a [illegible]



last thoroughly totalitarian regime lend substance to [illegible] suggest, however, that this appraisal remains starkly incomplete if it fails to take into account one more age that reached a turning point in 1991. I mean the nuclear age, which opened in another epochal August of the twentieth century, August of 1945. (Somehow in this century August was the month in which history chose to produce a disproportionately large number of its most important events.) No narrative of the extraordinary violence of the twentieth century can possibly be told without taking into account the greatest means of violence ever created.

[illegible] that no man should be called happy before he died. They meant not only that even the most contented life could be undone by misfortune at the last minute but also that the meaning of an entire life might depend on its ending. For a life's last chapter was not merely an event, with its freight of suffering or joy; it was a disclosure, in whose light the story's beginning and middle might need to be [illegible] rewritten. Or, to vary the metaphor, stories, including the stories of historical epochs, are like pictures of heavenly constellations drawn by connecting [illegible] addition of new dots may merely add detail to the picture that has already taken shape, but it may also alter the entire image. The swan will turn out to be a crab; what looked like a whale turns into a dragon. Such was the case, certainly, with the end of the Soviet Union and the Cold War. The Soviet Union's infirmities, we now must suppose, were eating away at its power long before, one fine day in 1991, the empire evaporated. It is understandable that contemporaries are usually startled by events, but historians have no right to present surprise endings to the tales they tell. Their new job will be to retell the story of the Soviet Union in such a way that the sudden collapse at the end makes sense.

So it must eventually be with the nuclear age. [illegible] Cold War that was the scene of history's only nuclear arms race will be very different from the story of a Cold War that turned out to be only the first of many interlocking nuclear arms races in many parts of the world. The nuclear dilemma, in sum, hangs like a giant question mark over our waning century. To 1914 and 1991 two dates therefore need to be added. The first is [illegible] second is the as yet unknown future [illegible] at which the end of the nuclear age will be disclosed. Whether this conclusion will be the elimination of nuclear weapons (either before or after their further use) or, conceivably, the elimination of the species that built them is the deepest of the questions that need answering when we

consider the still-open books of the next century.

In the United States, the historians' oversight is only one symptom of a wider inattention to the nuclear question. In the first years of the post–Cold War period, the nuclear peril seemed to all but disappear from public awareness. Some of the reasons were understandable. As long as the Cold War lasted, it had seemed almost indistinguishable from nuclear danger—the more so since both looked as if they were going to last indefinitely. One half of this assumption was of course negated by the Soviet collapse. For a while, the public seemed to imagine that nuclear danger, too, had unexpectedly proven ephemeral. The political antagonism that had produced the only nuclear terror Americans had ever known had, after all, really ended with the Cold War. The prospect of a second Cuban Missile Crisis became remote. It was reasonable for a while to imagine that the end of the struggle in whose name nuclear weapons had been built would lead to their end. Perhaps it would happen quietly and smoothly. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty would be accepted and succeeded by arms reductions. START II would be ratified and followed by START III, START III by START IV (at some point the lesser nuclear powers would be drawn into the negotiations), and so on, until the last warhead was gone. American presidents encouraged the public complacency. "I saw the chance to rid our children's dreams of the nuclear nightmare, and I did," President George Bush said at the Republican convention in 1992; and in 1997, President Bill Clinton boasted that "our children are growing up free from the shadows of the Cold War and the threat of nuclear holocaust."

The news media took their cue from this official fantasy. Nuclear weapons all but dropped out of the news and opinion pages. In the decade since the Berlin Wall was torn down, newspaper readers and television viewers were given little indication that some 31,000 nuclear weapons remained in the world, or that 6,000 of them were targeted at the United States. A whole generation came of age lacking even rudimentary information regarding nuclear arms and nuclear peril. On the tenth anniversary of the end of the wall, few commentators taking stock of the decade bothered to mention the persistence of nuclear danger.

A frightening new landscape was coming into view. To begin with, the presidents who said that they had ended nuclear danger had not acted that way. Clinton's repeated though little-reported "bottom up" reviews of defense policy left the strategy of nuclear deterrence [illegible] lacking the benefit of new justification—or, for that matter, [illegible]

[illegible] moved to acquire the weapons. If nuclear powers such as Russia and the United States, which no longer had a quarrel, were entitled to maintain nuclear arsenals, why not countries that, like India and Pakistan, were chronically at war? To insist otherwise would, in the words of India's foreign minister Jaswant Singh, be to shut the Third World out of the "nuclear paradigm" established [illegible] "nuclear apartheid." In May of 1998, India and Pakistan, accordingly, fired off their rival salvos of nuclear tests. The antagonism between the Soviet Union and the United States had been "cold," but this conflict was hot. The three wars that the two countries had fought since the late 1940s were in short order followed by a fourth in the summer of 1999. The world's multiplying nuclear arsenals were meanwhile supplemented by a new prominence of their repellent siblings in the family of weapons of mass destruction—chemical and biological weapons, which may become the instrument of choice of terrorist groups worried about the expense and difficulty of making nuclear weapons.

By the century's end, the web of arms-control agreements that had been painstakingly woven during the last half century of the Cold War was tearing apart. The United States Senate voted down the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty—an [illegible] decades of effort by the United States to halt the spread of nuclear weapons. The Senate also persuaded the Clinton Administration to develop a national missile defense, which would violate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972, thereby threatening to turn Russia's stalling on the START negotiations into outright opposition. The combined resolve of the five senior nuclear powers (the United States, Russia, England, France, and China) to keep their arsenals and [illegible] weakened the breakdown of the Nuclear Nonproliferation [illegible]

the nature of nuclear technology—as of all technology—to become universally available and therefore that, in the absence of political will, the world would tend to become nuclear-armed. In a world boiling with local (and not so local) hatreds, the retrogression of arms control raises the question of whether the Cold War, instead of being the high point of danger in a waning nuclear age, will prove to have been a mere bipolar rehearsal for a multipolar second nuclear age.

A number of voices challenged this status quo by calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, but their views went largely unreported by the news media that had ignored the dangers of which they warned. Among these voices were leaders of the traditional anti-nuclear peace movement; the seven governments of the New Agenda coalition, composed of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden, and South Africa; and an impressive array of retired military officers and civilian leaders, including President Jimmy Carter, Senator Alan Cranston, former commander of the Strategic Air Command General George Lee Butler, and the commander of the allied air forces in the Gulf War, General Charles Horner. In a series of reports and statements, these people have argued that the end of the Cold War has provided a historically unique but perishable opportunity to remove nuclear danger by eliminating nuclear arsenals everywhere. (Since only eight nations possess nuclear weapons, and of these only India, Pakistan, and Israel have not signed the Nonproliferation Treaty, abolition means persuading just three nations to live as would the 185 signatories.) Notable among the new abolitionists were some of the most hawkish figures of the Cold War, including Paul Nitze, drafter in 1950 of National Security Council Memorandum-68, regarded by many as the charter of American Cold War policy. He recently argued that the United States' huge lead in the development of high-precision weaponry created a new military context in which the United States simply did not need nuclear weapons. Considering this advantage, Nitze could "think of no circumstances under which it would be wise for the United States to use nuclear weapons," and therefore recommended that the nation "should steadily get rid" of them. The emergence of this hawkish strain of abolitionism, in which precision, high-explosive conventional bombing would give the United States a usable military superiority that nuclear weapons could never confer, assured that, should the idea of abolition ever take hold, a debate within the ranks of the abolitionists themselves would begin. But Nitze's historic proposal fell into the media silence that had swallowed up all other proposals for abolition.

PREFACE TO A CENTURY

It seems timely, then, to take a fresh look at the nuclear question in the context of the century that has just ended. The exercise, we can hope, will shed light on both the nuclear dilemma and the story of the century, short or otherwise, in which nuclear weapons have played, and unfortunately go on playing, so important a part. One place to begin is with a work that, as it happens, was first published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, in London, at the turn of the last century, in 1899: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad wrote in the heyday of a liberal civilization that had seemed to spread steadily and grow stronger for most of the nineteenth century. Its articles of faith were that science and technology were the sources of a prosperity without limits; that the free market would spread the new abundance across the boundaries of both classes and nations; that liberty and democracy, already established in several of the most powerful and advanced nations, were gaining ground almost everywhere; and that all of these forces were welling an unstoppable tide of overall human progress. It is, of course, a revival of these ideas—minus, notably, the idea of progress—that has inspired the belief that the twentieth century, or even history itself, ended in 1991. Conrad was not an acolyte of this faith. He was perhaps the most acute among a number of observers who, having witnessed firsthand what the "civilized" countries were doing in the "backward" parts of the world, where colonialism was at its zenith, discerned the shape of a radically different future. *Heart of Darkness* was many things. It was a tale of travel to an exotic place. It was a glimpse, through the eyes of the seaman Marlow, of the atrocities committed by King Leopold's International Association of the Congo. It was an investigation by literary means of the extremes of evil. And it was, as we today are in a position to appreciate, a topographic map, clairvoyant in its specificity, of the moral landscape of the twentieth century.

"It was like a weary pilgrimage amongst hints for nightmares," Marlow says of his sea journey to the Congo along the African coast. The hinted nightmares turned out to be the waking experience of the century ahead. That century, Conrad apparently understood, was about to open up new possibilities for evil. In *Heart of Darkness*, he seems to thumb through them prospectively, as if through a deck of horrific tarot cards. The concentration camps are there. The black men "dying slowly," "in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair," whom Marlow witnesses in a grove of trees immediately upon arriving at an outer station, are unmistakable precursors of the millions of

men and women who were [illegible] concentration camps soon to be built in Europe. The monster Kurtz, the charismatic, almost-legal killer of murders in the name of progress and efficiency, although "hollow at the core," who gifted with magnificent eloquence and "electrified large meetings," is a sort of prefiguration of Hitler. Conrad even has a Belgian journalist comment that Kurtz would have made a "splendid leader of an extreme party." Which one? "Any party," is the answer. For, the journalist stammers, "he was an—an extremist." But Kurtz is not to be understood as a [illegible] acter. "All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz," Marlow says, in a moment of editorializing.

Consider, by way of inexplicably refined forecasting, the likeness of some of Marlow's comments about Kurtz to some comments Hitler makes about himself in 1936. The power of Hitler's voice, carried to the German public over the radio, was a key element of his power. Conrad notes something similar in Kurtz. Marlow:

> Kurtz discoursed. A voice [illegible] the very last.

Yet beneath the rich and resonant voice lay an emptiness:

> The voice was gone. What else had been there?

And, for comparison, Hitler speaking at a rally in 1936 about his appeal to the German people:

> At this hour do we not again feel [illegible] has brought us together? Long ago you [illegible] voice of a man, and it struck to your hearts, it awakened you, and you followed this voice. You [illegible] it for years, without [illegible] him whose voice it was you [illegible] followed.

To give just one more example, anyone who witnessed the monotonous, ceaseless American artillery fire into "free-fire zones" in Vietnam will experience a shock of recognition in the following description of a French navy [illegible] to the African jungle:

> In the empty immensity of earth, sky and water, there she was, incomprehensible. [illegible] ment. Pop would a six-inch gun, a small flame would dart and vanish, a little white smoke would disappear, a tiny projectile would [illegible] He screeched and nothing happened. Nothing happen. There was [illegible] receding, a sense of [illegible]

Nor did Conrad fail to [illegible] dispensable props of the gigantic, insane, state-sponsored crimes of our time: the obedient functionaries. The "banality" of the [illegible]

[illegible] curries favor with him, prompting Marlow to observe, "I let him run on, this [illegible]

DOES HIGH-PRECISION CONVENTIONAL WEAPONRY MAKE NUCLEAR ARSENALS UNNECESSARY?

and would find nothing inside but a little loose dirt, maybe." [illegible] that so many decent people were to experience in having to take ridiculous personages seriously solely because of the immense suffering they were [illegible] night, Marlow comments, "I resented bitterly the [illegible] that monstrous [illegible] Hitler, executed by the Nazis in 1944, experienced a similar [illegible] and of the years of suffering he was to make us endure [illegible] Conrad, vaulting ahead in prophecy to 1945, provided of the destination toward which all [illegible] species might one day get ready to wipe itself off [illegible] it returns several times, always at critical moments in which it occurs is the legendary addendum "Exterminate all the brutes" that Kurtz pinned to

voractously, as it to devour all the earth with all its mankind." The technical means for destroying the species lay far in the future, but the psychological and moral preparations, it appears, were well under way in 1899.

THE FIRST AUGUST: THE BEGINNING OF THE REAL TWENTIETH CENTURY

As the scholar Jessica Reifer has pointed out, Conrad's intimations in a single text of virtually all the unprecedented evils, including the threat of self-extinction, that Western humanity was about to visit upon itself and the world in the twentieth century are evidence before the fact of their common roots and essential unity. These "hints for nightmares," however, did not materialize in

first of the century's fateful Augusts, the First World War broke out. Then the nightmares followed, one after another, in a chain whose unbroken

continuity.

The judgment that the outbreak of the First World War was the starting point in the twentieth century's plunge into horror did not originate

ably wide consensus of historians. George Kennan spoke for this consensus in his diplomatic histo-

As Kennan suggests, the stories of the two world wars on the one hand and of the two great totalitarian regimes on the other were as tightly

and totalitarianism were kin in more than name. From 1914 onward, each fed the other in a vicious spiral of violence. To begin with, the shock of the

created the social conditions essential to the suc-

words of the historian Martin Malia, "This war disorganized Russia's still immature political structures to the point where the Bolshevik Party, a

ities of the 1870s, was able to seize power. . . ." Many understood even at the time that the brutality of the war had been carried over to the system of rule that followed. As the contemporary

Chernov put it, "The moral posture of the Bolshevik Revolution was inherited from the war in which it was born."

That the Nazis' rise to power in Germany was made possible by the war is also accepted widely. It will be recalled here—without trying to recount the story of the destabilization of German politics and society by her defeat and the harsh terms of the peace settlement—to recall two comments made by Hitler. The first is his remark that "if at the beginning of the war twelve or fifteen thousand of these Hebrew corrupters of the people had been held under poison gas, as happened to hundreds of thousands of our very best German workers in the field, the sacrifice of millions at the front would not have been in vain." The idea of killing Jews by gas was not one that Hitler, who had been a victim of an English gas attack, was to forget. The second comment is his description of his reaction to the declaration of the First World War. "Even today," he wrote in *Mein Kampf*, "I am not ashamed to say that, overpowered by stormy enthusiasm, I fell down on my knees and thanked Heaven from an overflowing heart."

If in the century's Teens and Twenties total war prepared the way for totalitarianism, in the Thirties, when Hitler carried out the series of aggressions that brought on the Second World War, the process worked the other way around. Hitler's biographers tell us that while at the front in the First World War he felt so much at home in the trenches and so ill at ease in civilian society that he canceled all his leaves. For him, it seems, not war but peace was hell, and there is a sense in which the interwar period was just one more leave that was canceled by a peace-weary Hitler.

The plainest of these links, finally, is that between the war against Hitler and the decision

(and as late as 1939 more than two years before the United States went to war with Germany and Japan), when the businessman Alexander Sachs visited President Franklin Roosevelt to recommend an atomic-weapons program, Roosevelt commented, "Alex, what you

Sachs replied, "Precisely." Throughout the war, the scientists at Los Alamos—many of them

prospect that Hitler would succeed in building the bomb first.



Evil even when appeared [illegible] preparing the ground for more evil, and Hitler's route became a precedent for the [illegible]. Extraordinary malevolence induced his adversaries to embrace an evil that otherwise they conceivably might have forgone. Through this indirect paternity were reborn [illegible] that he, more than anyone else, had pioneered. As in a magic trick—appropriately accompanied by a gigantic world-blinding flash and (mushroom shaped) puff of smoke—the split atom's annihilation, even as they were going down to defeat in Hitler's bunker, were in 1945 transferred to the care of Washington.

EXTERMINATION

What was the nature of this new possibility to which Hitler had led the way? Had he gone and that the series of calamities inaugurated by the war in 1914 brought us [illegible] of a pendulum swinging in an ever-widening arc, to fuller and fuller realization, until the human species created weapons whereby it could destroy itself? Violence on a previously unimaginable scale was the obvious common denominator. This violence was the basis for the increasing use of that

and especially of "strategic" bombing, aimed at [illegible] extensive but also its purest form, inasmuch as [illegible] struments that produce it.) But something more was involved. In Kurtz's phrase "Exterminate all [illegible] scale, but they aim at more than slaughter. By [illegible] ste. Mass slaughter is a crime against the livin[illegible]

on creating. Murder is a crime that, by destroying individual lives, violates the legal and moral or [illegible] a community; extermination is a crime that, by destroying an entire community, is a crime against the family of communities that make up humankind—a crime [illegible] international law has come to recognize, "against humanity."

Genocide—the destruction of a people, whether [illegible]

HITLER WAS WILLING TO DESTROY GERMANY: A POLICY OF ANNIHILATION CAN LEAD TO SUICIDE

[illegible] quantitatively [illegible] but is not the only one. Murder is the extermination of [illegible] political opponents, and Mao Zedong and [illegible] Pol Pot annihilated entire [illegible] the Bolsheviks' very first year in power, they discovered a category of crime that they called "objective." A crime was "subjective" when you had done something wrong; it was "objective" when, through no deed of your own, you belonged to a social class that the government wanted to liquidate. As early as 1918, Latvian Latsis, one of the chiefs of the Cheka, the precursor of the KGB, announced the goal [illegible] "We are not annihilating the bourgeoisie as a class." Thus there was no need, Latsis explained, to "prove that this or that man acted against the interests of Soviet power." [illegible] "The answer to these questions [illegible] the accused." "That," he said, "is the quintessence of the Red Terror"—terror that was to cost the Soviet people an estimated 50 or 60 million lives in [illegible]

A third target of policies of extermination was cities and their populations. Let us consider two [illegible] the bombing of Hamburg (the fourth city of Germany) in July 1943. As early as July 1940, Churchill had [illegible] Germany, but called them "[illegible] attacks on Germany. From then until 1942, the Bomber Command, afflicted by high loss rates and fearful of losing out in interservice rivalry with the Army and the Navy, turned away from "precision" bombing—which had to be carried out [illegible] be carried out at night. The aim was to destroy the [illegible] civilians and destroying their homes. By the end of 1941, most cities in Lübeck and Cologne had made it clear that the annihilation of entire cities in one or a few raids was feasible. Accordingly, Area Bombing Directive, Order No. 17, of May 27, 1942, stated under the heading "Intention," that the aim of the raid was "to destroy HAMBURG." The order estimated that 10,000 tons of bombs would have to be dropped to "complete the process of elimination." And thus it was done, producing a firestorm in the city and killing some 45,000 people in a single night.

The second example is Hitler's plan, formed even before his attack on Russia, in June of 1941, for the annihilation of Moscow and Leningrad. Moscow was to be razed because it was "the center of [Bolshevik] doctrine"—for Hitler's larger goal was an "ethnic catastrophe." He intended to dig a reservoir where Moscow had once been. At first, he planned to spare Leningrad, because it was "incomparably more beautiful" than Moscow; but soon he put Leningrad, too, on the list of cities to be destroyed. His explanation sheds light on the mentality of those who are preparing to exterminate entire human communities:

> I suppose that some people are clutching their heads [illegible] to find an answer to the question, "How can the Führer destroy a city like St. Petersburg?"... I would prefer not to see anyone suffer, not even [illegible] But when I realize the species is in danger, then no universe sentiment gives way to the coldest reason.

The Nazi general Franz Halder concurred with this supposedly cold reasoning: annihilating the two cities, he wrote, would be a "national catastrophe which [would] deprive not only Bolshevism but also Muscovite nationalism of their centers."

A plan was drawn up. Leningrad would be [illegible] to weaken it "by terror and growing starvation"; then the Germans would "remove the survivors in captivity in the interior of Russia, level Leningrad to the ground with high explosives and [illegible] to the north of the [illegible] to the Finns."

Of course, we know that the two cities survived, owing not to any thaw in Hitler's cold reasoning but to the almost superhuman resistance mounted by the Russian people.

EXTERMINATION AS A SYSTEMIC EVIL

Just as the twentieth century's policies of extermination—whether of peoples, classes, or cities—enveloped entire human communities, so also they were carried out by entire

communities—or, at any rate, by the authorities that putatively represented those communities. Extermination, a species of crime requiring extensive social resistance to carry out, will be—a systemic evil. To the extent that popular support was present, the policies amounted to attempted murders of one society by another. Although there can be debate over to what extensive popular support was for Stalin's and Hitler's policies of extermination, there can be no doubt that, through the states that ruled over these peoples, the resources of entire societies were placed at the disposal of those carrying out the policies.

Those resources were not just the customary ones—the secret police, the transportation systems, the concentration-camp administrations, the armies, the bomber forces. They had to include mass cooperation of the kind that only the state alone provides. When the state becomes an exterminator, and the law, instead of enjoining evil, supports and enforces it, as does the whole tremendous weight of custom, habit, bureaucratic inertia, and social pressure—the individual who might seek to oppose the policies is left in extremity of moral solitude. Even the voice of conscience, in these circumstances, can become an ally of the evildoers. People find themselves in the dilemma defined by Mark Twain when he presented Huck Finn's inner deliberations whether to turn in his friend the runaway black slave, Jim. Huck's "conscience," he believes, is telling him that it is wrong not to turn in Jim. Nevertheless, Huck decides to do what is "wrong" and hides Jim. Adolf Eichmann, too, heard the voice of an inverted conscience, but he, unlike Huck, obeyed it. At the end of the war, with defeat of Germany in sight, he had an opportunity to slow down or even halt the transports of the Jews to the killing centers, but instead he redoubled his efforts. "The sad and very uncomfortable truth," Arendt writes, "probably was that it was not his fanaticism but his very conscience that prompted Eichmann to adopt his uncompromising attitude during the last year of the war. . . ." For "he remembered perfectly well that he would have had a bad conscience only if he had not carried out what he had been ordered to do—ship millions of men, women, and children to their death with great zeal and the most meticulous care."

EXTERMINATION AS PSEUDOSCIENCE

As if to leave individual judgment in even greater perplexity, [illegible] to be precise, pseudoscience (otherwise known as ideology)—was summoned to lend its pseudoauthority to the policies of extermina-

tween "historical nations" (they included Germany, Poland, and France, which were [illegible] and "ahistorical peoples" (they included most of the Balkan peoples), which were destined for history's scrap heap. His interpretation of [illegible] that the Marxist theory of [illegible] Russia, claiming that Stalin's Russia [illegible] Hitler ruled and the role played in Hitler's economy.

Hitler's Final Solution of the Jewish "problem" [illegible] part of a [illegible] scientific or pseudoscientific [illegible] he planned to eradicate Poland and Ukraine, among other nations. For example, of forty-five million inhabitants in Western Russia, according to a memorandum [illegible] occupied Eastern Territories, thirty-one million [illegible] deported. "Hopefully a [illegible] and the plan will be done," Hitler suggested.

[illegible] cannot [illegible] Hitler, caught up in the grandiose theories of racial pseudoscience, had transcended mere nationalism is shown by his [illegible] even the German people if they showed themselves cowardly [illegible] and ready for sacrifice that they will stake their [illegible] annihilated by another, stronger power." In that event, he added, "I would not shed a tear for the German people." [illegible] in 1945, he ordered the destruction of [illegible] German society, including its industry, buildings, and food stocks. But then had he not warned the world, as [illegible] devouring all the earth with all its mankind, that "we may perish, perhaps. But we shall take the whole world with us, a final victory in the sense of the destruction of everything that is not in accordance with our nature."

Hitler's willingness to accept—and even to carry [illegible] the destruction of Germany and the whole world into the bargain) was an early warning [illegible] coordinated on a much greater scale in the nuclear policy of "mutual assured destruction" [illegible] Warsaw Pact [illegible] annihilation [illegible] and involved the [illegible] of tens of millions of [illegible]

EXTERMINATION AS RADICAL EVIL

The twentieth century's policies of extermination were radical in one more sense. Radical evil, in the Latin origins of the word, means evil that goes to the root. The root, the ground of evil, afflicts and destroys: namely, life. The [illegible] life, [illegible] distinct from the [illegible] death, which is the power that enables communities composed of mortal beings to regenerate and preserve themselves in history. And it is this power, precisely, that policies of extermination annul.

After witnessing the trial of Eichmann, Arendt never wavered from the phrase "the banality of evil." Only the good has depth and can be radical," she wrote in a letter to her friend Gershom Scholem. Evil, she now believed, "is never radical,' only extreme." It was this very shallowness, she concluded, that produced the monstrous acts that no moral authority can ever forgive. "It is only because," she explained, "human thought tries to reach some depth, to go to the roots, and the moment it concerns itself with evil it is frustrated because there is nothing." The distinction between evil and nothingness, which has been closely examined by [illegible] theologians, was first posited in Christian theology by Augustine and remains a [illegible] to this day.

Arendt thought there was something [illegible] about radical evil as a concept. First, there is nothing [illegible] about Eichmann, for when [illegible] Eichmann, as Arendt had pointed out, [illegible] of a community that [illegible] And [illegible] in the [illegible] community [illegible] Perpetrators [illegible] evil that is radical (or "extreme," [illegible] the emptiness of their minds [illegible]

THE SECOND AUGUST: NUCLEAR EXTERMINATION

It her relig[illegible] was not a blessing [illegible] that had been [illegible] nuclear weapons, but it is plain that what she had to say applies in almost every particular to nuclear policies and nuclear danger. In other words, although Hiroshima came as a great surprise and shock to the world, it did not arrive without a historical context and historical precedents. On the contrary, it was the supreme expression of [illegible] had been developing ever since Conrad had Kurtz write, "Exterminate all the brutes." Behind Hiroshima stood not only the obvious precedent of area bombing but all of the twentieth century's politics of extermination. There amounted, by the end of the Second World War, to what might be called a legacy of extermination, and in August 1945 the United States fell heir to it. The hallmarks of the legacy were all present. Hiroshima [illegible] threat of extermination—extermination, this time, not only of nations and peoples but of the human species. The root of life that now would be severed would be the root of all human life: birth itself, and would shut all future human beings out of existence. The evil was a systemic evil. The system [illegible] "balance of terror" was established, went beyond any single state to incorporate the greatest powers of the world, which, in the system of mutual assured destruction, became jointly complicit in the project. The threat was supported by pseudoscience [illegible] and other forms of futurology manufactured in think tanks and academic institutions [illegible] power. Nuclear "strategy"—regarded by many as a contradiction in terms [illegible] center of banality. Nuclear arms increased the capacity of human beings [illegible] et to satisfy [illegible] improvements would merely be "overkill." The arsenals threatened radical evil, in the fullest and most exact sense of that term: they brought radical evil to perfection. The powers of human response to evil would be entirely destroyed by the evil deed itself. Policies of extermination spilled over into suicidal [illegible] self." Again we [illegible] The conscience of the individual was again thrust into time by the [illegible]

HISTORY PLAYED A TRICK WHEN IT GAVE THE BOMB TO THE U.S. RATHER THAN TO HITLER

nation. At a stroke, it removed them from their totalitarian residence and planted them at the [illegible] of the imperial enemy's policy, of the powerful democratic nation about to assume leadership [illegible] The new location brought with it a new moral and [illegible] most radical evil imaginable—the extinction of [illegible] first placed in the hands of a liberal republic. [illegible] sheer impossibility of science or history rules out our imagining the latter possibility), lent it a triple [illegible] lacked.

In the first place, the bomb gained luster from [illegible] passages in its history, including slavery and the [illegible] said that the United States was no Nazi Germany [illegible] plan to make the [illegible] heavy [illegible] suicidal inclinations) so clearly pointed in the di[illegible] it. Hitler [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

what he had already been doing slowly and clumsily with gas chambers. The United States, on the other hand, had shown no recent inclination for policies of extermination, as was demonstrated shortly by its mild, liberal, extremely successful occupation policies in Germany and Japan. In the second place, the bomb arrived just in time to hurry along the end of the most destructive war in history. It made its appearance as a war-ending, war-winning device. The totalitarian and the liberal regimes had arrived at their policies of extermination along very different historical paths. Whereas Hitler and Stalin destroyed peoples, classes, and cities for reasons that even today defy rational explanation, the United States destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki for the perfectly clear and comprehensible purposes of ending the war quickly and getting the upper hand over the Soviet Union in the embryonic Cold War. (To point this out is not to justify these acts; it is only to observe that the goals of policy were conventional and rational.) In the third place, the almost immediate outbreak of the Cold War with the totalitarian Soviet Union created a justification for continuing to build nuclear arsenals, lending the bomb still another warrant of virtue. It assumed the role of guardian of the free world.

To this triple validation of policies of nuclear extermination, accorded by the accident of timing and place, a fourth, of later origin, must be added. Although it was true that with the growth of the arsenals the depth and range of terror were soon increased to their earthly maximum, it also happened that none was ever used after Nagasaki. Instead, they were held suspended, like the sword of Damocles cited by President John Kennedy, over a completely jeopardized yet undevastated world. It was as if, in the nuclear arsenals of the Cold War, the destruction and mass killing of the entire first half of the twentieth century had been distilled into a poison of fantastic potency but then this poison, instead of being administered to a doomed world, had been held in reserve, being employed only to produce terror. To the question whether Western Civilization had put behind it the legacy of extermination that it had been developing for half a century, the nuclear policymakers of the Cold War in effect gave an equivocal answer. Their answer was, No, for we have plans for extermination that beggar Hitler's and Stalin's, but our sincere wish is never to be provoked into actually committing the deed. Certainly, the legacy of extermination had not been renounced. Rather, it had been lavishly developed and assigned a more important role in world affairs than ever before. Now the world's greatest power as well as its adversary relied upon it for basic security, while the other limiting circumstance of the new threat was only to prevent its being carried out. And not only did the bomb prevent its own nuclear war, the theorists said; it prevented the worst of the conventional wars: no conventional third world war broke out. In the meantime, however, an estimated 40 million people, most of them civilians, were killed in local wars—a fact suggesting that major war was as much displaced as deterred.

Whether a third world war was headed off because of nuclear deterrence or for some other reason is a question not easily resolved. It is a historical fact, however, that in the minds of most policymakers as well as millions of citizens nuclear deterrence worked. The bomb, already seen as a war-winner and a freedom-defender, now was granted the additional title of peacemaker. (The MX missile was given this very name, and the Strategic Air Command adopted the motto "Peace Is Our Profession.") Here was a bargain with the devil to make Faust green with envy. Victory, freedom, peace: was there anything else for which the world might petition an openhanded Lucifer?

And yet none of these benefits altered in the slightest particular the irreducible facts of what nuclear weapons were, what they could do, and what they were meant to do "if deterrence failed." One bomb of the appropriate megatonnage would still obliterate any city; ten bombs, ten cities. Hitler had killed an estimated 6 million Jews; Stalin had sent an estimated 20 million of his fellow Soviet citizens to their deaths. A few dozen well-placed nuclear bombs could outdo these totals by an order of magnitude. But at the height of the Cold War, there were not a few dozen nuclear bombs; there were almost 70,000, with thousands poised on hair-trigger alert. A policy of extermination did not cease being that because the goals it supported were laudable. Described soberly and without the slightest hyperbole, it was a policy of retaliatory genocide.

For most people most of the time, these perils remained all but unimaginable. But every now and then the reality of the policy was borne in on someone. That happened, for instance, to Robert McNamara shortly after he became secretary of defense in 1961, when he received a briefing on the Single Integrated Operational Plan at the headquarters of the Strategic Air Command. In the event of a Soviet conventional attack on Europe—or merely the plausible likelihood of such an attack—the United States' Plan 1-A, which was its only true option for major nuclear war, McNamara learned, was to annihilate every Communist country from Poland to China. There was no operational means, he further learned, by which, if the president desired, he could spare one or more of these countries. Albania, then engaged in bitter polemics with Moscow, was to be obliterated merely because a Soviet radar facility was stationed on its soil. The plan was for obliteration multiple acts of genocide. In *The War*

ards of Armageddon, Fred Kaplan reports that "McNamara was horrified [by the idea of using nuclear weapons] and determined to create other options. Today McNamara favors the abolition of nuclear weapons because, in his carefully chosen words, they threaten "the destruction of nations."

Hiroshima, in sum, had created a gulf between ends and means. Never had evil been more radical; never had the good that was hoped from it been greater. The means were an evil that exceeded the capacity of the human being to imagine them; the ends were all the splendors of liberal civilization and peace.



Thus, through the invention, production, and deployment of nuclear arsenals, was the tradition of extermination glimpsed in prospect by Conrad in colonized Africa, pioneered and developed under totalitarian government and in total war, conjoined to the liberal tradition that had been knocked off course at the beginning of the [illegible] century by the First World War. In a political as well as a moral sense, however, the union was tentative. During the Cold War years, the Western nuclear powers (the United States, England, and France) did indeed learn the art of *Living with Nuclear Weapons*, in the title of the Harvard-sponsored book of 1983, but they had not taken the marriage vows. Reliance on nuclear arms was widely considered an extraordinary, provisional response to an extraordinary, provisional emergency: the threat, as many people in the West believed, to the freedom of the entire world by the Soviet Union, which, of course, soon developed nuclear arsenals of its own.

The Soviet threat shaped the West's embrace of nuclear terror in two fundamental ways. First, it was placed in the moral scale opposite the nuclear threat, rendering the latter acceptable. The mere physical existence of humankind, many people believed, was worth risking for the sake of its moral and spiritual existence, represented by the survival of freedom. Second, most people were persuaded that the secretive nature of the Soviet regime ruled out effective inspection [illegible] ical nuclear-arms-control agreements, thus making full nuclear disarmament impossible. In 1946, when the United States put forward the Baruch Plan, which proposed the abolition of nuclear arms, the Soviet Union, now working at full tilt [illegible] gram as part of a global agreement to abolish nuclear weapons. However that may be, there is no doubt that the Soviet rejection of the Baruch Plan [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] that [illegible] heved from 1946 on, had proved itself ready to eliminate nuclear weapons, but the Soviet Union stood in the way. The Soviet threat, in American [illegible] an insuperable practical obstacle in the way of their abolition. As long as this appeared to be the case, the United States could regard itself as a re-

THE FUTURE OF EXTERMINATION: THE THIRD AND THE FOURTH AUGUSTS

The failed coup in Moscow brought on [illegible]



d. Interpretations of the
entieth century now require not so much
nterpreters as the world's decision
whether, in the wake of the Cold War, it will re-
nce again embrace them.

Let us, then, perform a thought experiment in
gine how the twentieth cen-
sible next chapters of the nu-
will imagine that the next
chapter is the last—that the
eliminate
ond, we will imagine that the
arms has been accepted and
has led to their proliferation.
is not chiefly forward, to the
world that lies ahead, but
backward upon the century
that has just ended.

In the event that abolition is embraced, we will find, I suggest, that what the American government said and the American public believed from 1946, when the Soviet Union rejected the Baruch Plan, until 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed, was essentially true: that the policymakers were as dismayed by nuclear dan- people were; that in their minds enduring the risk of human extinction really had been the threat to freedom around the world posed by the Soviet Union; rnment would indeed have preferred to abolish nuclear weapons in 1946 but had been prevented by the Soviet Union; and that ruly why, when the Soviet Union col- l, the United States seized the opportuni- the world to nuclear abolition. We further, take seriously the often-repeated ntrol" was an invaluable n for reducing nuclear er until political conditions were ri full nuclear disarmament. We will take even ments of those who held that it was not nuclear arms that fueled the political differences of the Cold War but the po- f the Cold War that fueled the nuclear-arms race, and who therefore argued And then we will show because the anti-Communism of the time had been authentic, Communism's end ned the way to abolition of the

arms that had protected the security of mankind. We will be unsurprised to see complacency in the Cold War's fierce hawks [illegible] abolitionists. And we will note with [illegible] the example of these former hawks [illegible] ed by hawks in other nations, including India, Pakistan, and Israel, who therefore agreed to relinquish their countries' nuclear weapons as part of the general settlement.

Even the evolution of [illegible] torians may go on to relate, will then seem to have been a slow education, in the realities of the nuclear age, especially after the [illegible] Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, which had created a deep impression on the [illegible] the minds of later abolitionists, such as Robert McNamara. It will be the enduring task of historians to record how, even on the political right, the most militant believers in armed force [illegible] came around to an understanding that, in the words of Ronald Reagan, the most conservative president of the era, "nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought," and they will trace the path from that understanding to the discussion of nuclear abolition at the Reykjavik summit meeting of 1986 with the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Paralleling this slow evolution in the realm of will, we will see, was the equally slow decline in the practice of the so-called tradition of nuclear [illegible] which gradually taught statesmen that even a state that possessed a nuclear monopoly [illegible] gain no military or political benefit from it and so did not use nuclear weapons after Nagasaki. In this story, acts of nuclear restraint—by the United States in Vietnam, by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, by China in its border war with Vietnam in 1979—will have the place that battles [illegible] Bloodier narratives. The Cold War thereby [illegible] partially redeemed in our eyes as a vast laboratory in which, at the price of a few [illegible] the world learned through [illegible] oblique experience that nuclear weapons were futile as they were [illegible] and should be eliminated.

The lessons will go deeper still. When the last nuclear plutonium [illegible] (or, more likely, sheltered [illegible] deep cavern), we will see that the ground for nuclear disarmament had been prepared [illegible] on one hand, by the peace movement in the United States and, on the other, by the [illegible] against Soviet power by [illegible] empire (two movements that at the time failed, on the whole, to grasp the [illegible] their activity). The [illegible] the peace movement in the East—[illegible] the first stage in a global [illegible] by Soviet totalitarianism but its close relative, total war

arms.

[illegible] differently. To begin with, we will not be able [illegible]

n away. Liberalism will itself have un-
lly embraced extermination.

A

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Will it shake off the twentieth
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THE SEARCHABLE SOUL

Privacy in the age of information technology

As the new century begins, at least 72 million Americans are using the Internet, each of them producing data as rapidly as he or she consumes it, each tracked by technologies ever more able to collate the smallest preference or the greatest desire. Hope, fear, curiosity, joy—in some form, all our emotions and impulses have become digitized, retrievable, and displayed for sale.

Our essential records (age, address, credit rating, marital status, etc.) also are increasingly captured in electronic form, and are thus [illegible] efficiencies of scale and the [illegible] Web site, for example, [illegible] seven dollars, to scan "over two billion records to create a single [illegible]

Worried that [illegible] the [illegible] Magazine [illegible] might [illegible]

[illegible] Associate Publisher of Mother Jones Magazine.

[illegible] Internet publication Multimedia Medical Abstracts, *[illegible] Department of Industry, and is an author, most recently, of* The Internet Yellow Pages *[illegible] Mecklermedia].*

MICHAEL DERTOUZOS,

[illegible] Director of the Laboratory for Computer Science at MIT, and was earlier the principal architect of the Advanced Automation System for air traffic control. He was recently [illegible] the Center for Technology and International Studies.

[illegible]

[illegible] Internet portal company, and is a pioneer in the Web software industry. He was recently Network Nation.

ALAN F. WESTIN,

[illegible] professor of public law and government at Columbia University, and the author of Privacy and Freedom. *He was instrumental in the passage of the Federal Privacy Act of 1974 which regulates government use of personal data held in government records.*

[illegible]

[illegible] columnist for Harper's Magazine. *He served as moderator*

COOKIES, MAGIC, AND THE GOLDEN EGG

[illegible]: Suddenly I'm worried. Like so many other Americans, I'm using the Internet [illegible] and increasingly complex and creative [illegible] from. But I'm aware that [illegible] I and I are watched, perhaps [illegible] more than ever before. When I come [illegible] information, how should I conceptualize my privacy?

[illegible]: I suggest we go back to an historical context. If you start with the Greek city-state and run through the Middle Ages into early parliamentary institutions and then to the American Republic, privacy remained largely unchanged by technology. When the Framers [illegible] the Bill of Rights, technology [illegible] photocopiers [illegible] and limited [illegible] the Fourth Amendment [illegible] protected [illegible] papers and effects [illegible] Fourth Amendment [illegible] computers and [illegible] protect [illegible] But it was the moment computer systems began to arrive with large-scale databases and remote terminals [illegible] that we started to [illegible] technology is transforming the way people reveal themselves.

[illegible]: One fundamental technology has miniaturized what's needed to store immense amounts of information, and, [illegible] information all around the world. Now information can be pulled together from diverse sources very rapidly. Today, for example, the tax returns of the entire country could be placed on several CD-ROMs. Soon almost everything about anyone—home movies, old snapshots, college test scores—will be storable in a small amount of space. The Internet itself I compare to a gigantic tape recorder that runs twenty-four hours a day, but the fact that people are able to log on and chat using anonymous names or quasi-anonymous screen names means that they have a tendency to talk about themselves without realizing that everything they're saying is being recorded. The same thing is true in the workplace, where e-mail and, in some cases, voice mail can be archived. Because of the transactional capability of the Internet, people willingly provide information about themselves, for which companies reward them. We are moving into a period when your personal information is something that has value, and if you withhold it you are denying yourself opportunity. Merchants can almost always sell something for less if they're willing to take your personal information and sell it as a [illegible]. The potential is immense, and still only in their infancy.

[illegible]: Why isn't my government protecting me?

[illegible]: Well, the government *is* taking action but, in typical fashion, is moving slowly and without consistency. In the United States, we have a tradition of distributed government, and so a comprehensive privacy protection policy is unlikely to ever occur here. For example, your video-

tape rental records are, like your library records, generally protected by law, but your health records are generally not. There's no reason to expect that there will be any simple fix to the privacy issue. In Europe they are looking at severely limiting the distribution of personal data by private companies, but, oddly enough, they have paid no attention to what the government does with your data—which underscores the fact that people's concern about privacy ultimately has to do with whom they fear. In the United States we have a long tradition of healthy wariness about the government getting our data. In Europe people are comfortable with the government knowing everything about them but are concerned about catalogue companies getting their data. And although most Americans may feel they get too many catalogues, ultimately they like catalogues and other shopping options, and don't mind sharing their data with merchants. The federal government is likely to take some steps but nothing comprehensive.



HARRISON: I, for one, very much mind the companies mining my life for data. I fear them much more than I fear the government, which is a lumbering, ponderous, conflicted organism that has to get a court order to find out anything interesting about me, whereas Ron and his friends can find out a lot about me without any legal mechanism.

MCNEALY: The government can use the force of law to extract information from you. You may supply information to private industry—some of what enters databases through the Internet comes involuntarily when you get [illegible] license or fill out a [illegible]. But with government you're required to provide your Social Security number, which has become a key piece of your personal information—your birth date, address, and eye color. Absurdly, it's illegal to sell that information to databases. The U.S. Senate has passed legislation on this, but it has many exceptions.

million. Like any good business, we survey our

[illegible] to understand the aspects of our service [illegible] like the most and would like to see us improve. Far and away the leading features our users are interested in are related to personalization. The very power of the Internet is its ability to customize: to give you what you want and when you need it. For me to give you MyLycos, you have to tell me something about yourself. We have strict opt-in policies for all [illegible] data that we collect about our [illegible] doesn't tell us everything. You [illegible] but we cookie you strictly for [illegible] gathering [illegible], statistically [illegible] ration. We don't target individual [illegible] on information that we collect [illegible] without their knowledge.

[illegible] you reassured by this?

[illegible] vast majority of our users choose

to prove to me that my information will be used in a way that I like. Nothing is more individual than a pair of [illegible] that fit perfectly for me. I'm not going to spend time with some laser measurement system in my local [illegible]. All that is a consequence of technology, but the only way I get that [illegible] is by revealing very personal information to the manufacturer. So we just have to make sure that we don't take this notion of protecting privacy too far and hit it with a [illegible] that it keeps companies like me from innovating and providing users with technologies they can benefit from.

[illegible] isn't the real threat come when you can take the information that people supply, and combine it with what you find out about them on the Web?

[illegible] Right. Collaborative filtering is only as good as the data it's working with. Now, it's true that the ultimate power of the Web potentially lies in my ability to store and reduce your query strings—what you type into my search box—and then use your information base from what I've learned about your behavior. That's very powerful. And what I can learn from the query strings will yield huge accelerated amounts of information on behavior in America, but I won't use that information for any purpose other than what you've been told about and have objected to.

If you're all for the fairness that power will come up with tantalizing commercial offers, that would not bother me. I'd have great concern, however, if, having assembled that data, you provided it to others who might be judging me on one basis or another—for example, to a bank evaluating my credit application or to an insurance company deciding what rates to charge me.

What you're doing, Michael, is distinguishing between risk assessment and marketing. Risk assessment in a rationalistic, egalitarian society has to be based on objective information about people's creditworthiness, their insurability, and their employability.

INTERNET GLOSSARY

anonymizer *n*: an Internet service that [illegible] allowing information from a user's Internet [illegible] all identifying information [illegible]. See also [illegible].

biometric identifiers *n*: a subset of [illegible] identification technologies that include [illegible] fingerprint, retinal, or iris scans and [illegible] digital signatures. Also called [illegible].

collaborative filtering *n*: an automated process of recommending [illegible] based on the opinions of [illegible] with similar tastes. Also called [illegible]. Amazon.com's [illegible] recommendations for books, music, [illegible] are based on [illegible] collaborative filtering.

cookie *n*: an [illegible] placed by a Web site on an Internet user's computer [illegible] information [illegible] and [illegible] personalized [illegible] Web site. Also called [illegible].

encryption *n*: the process of converting [illegible] unreadable code to prevent unauthorized access. [illegible] requires a cipher key to [illegible] back into a readable format. Common [illegible] called [illegible].

packet *n*: a unit of data sent over a [illegible] network. [illegible] a message [illegible] Internet user [illegible] packet includes [illegible] addresses, [illegible] and [illegible].

packet-sniffing *n*: the process of monitoring data traveling over a network; [illegible] software [illegible] Ethernet [illegible] network [illegible] passwords, [illegible] messages.

query string *n*: [illegible] text concatenated to the end of a Web address that delivers a specialized command to the Web server. A query string usually provides the server with information the user has inputted into Web page forms as well as information about previous Web pages and sites the user has visited.

search engine *n*: an online database of records containing Web page addresses, titles, and content summaries. Information in a search engine is either submitted by Web page authors or gathered directly from the Web using automated search programs.

terabyte *n*: a unit of measurement [illegible] storage. (1 terabyte = 1,024 gigabytes = 1,048,576 megabytes) roughly equivalent to 38 miles of file cabinets filled [illegible] information.

sources: World Wide Internet Institute [illegible] Webopedia.com; [illegible] Dictionary; [illegible] Internet Encyclopedia; [illegible] Web pages; Enterprise.net [illegible] Wired; U.S. Post Office

What worries the average person is what information is being collected by employers, insurance companies, and banks in order to make those judgments. I'm sure about how our personal information affects our rights and benefits and opportunities. Marketing, on the other hand, is a different domain. People differ in the degree to which they're comfortable exposing themselves up to personalization. But many of us, in fact, willing to give up personal information

STOLL: I don't know that the Internet has changed the nature of the problem fundamentally. From the dawn of the credit-card database, companies have had tremendous insight into your behavior. Certainly the Internet allows us to collect more nuances—in fact, I can understand your preferences based on how you search my database—but the principles are the same.

THE KING'S MEN AND THE MICE

HARRISON: Mark, as a federal prosecutor, wouldn't you want the information Ron is gathering?

MARK ROSSELLO: I'd want it. Should I have it? No. Remember, when the government gets information, only a tiny percentage of it is used in criminal prosecutions. The government conducts about 60 million background checks a year. So the government is out there making judgments about people in all kinds of contexts, and the more information the better. Of course this information is valuable. That's the danger.

HARRISON: If your job is to catch criminals and put them in prison, why shouldn't you have it?

ROSSELLO: Because I might have to investigate a thousand people, of which ten might be indictable bad guys. What about the other 990? A lot of people are suspect but innocent. The other injury is that technology has made surveillance invisible. This is the technological difference Alan mentioned. For hundreds of years in England and the United States, you couldn't be searched without knowing you were being searched. If the king's men kicked down my door, well, I knew it. With wiretapping in the 1920s, it first became possible to be unsurveillably surveilled.

WESTIN: Actually, with the telegraph tapping in the 1850s you had the beginnings of the surreptitious tap. But you're quite right, the telephone made it ubiquitous.

ROSSELLO: And in cyberspace that's magnified. Now why is unsurveilled surveillance more repressive than the old notion of [illegible] knocking down my door? [illegible] you never know whether or [illegible] you. I've seen studies showing [illegible] like 20 or 30 million Americans [illegible] been wiretapped in cyberspace.

[illegible]

[illegible] to anticipate [illegible] essentially [illegible] correct one. [illegible] countries in Eastern Europe to monitor everyone, but the perception [illegible] actively kept people in line.

[illegible] Despite all the technological tools [illegible] and Stasi and Soviet [illegible] of total data in regime [illegible] to Orlov pointed out that what really mattered was neighborhood surveillance, the fact that every banking, and every other [illegible] former. It was the [illegible] your neighbor that really made people worry the most. George Orwell noted that it was the informer *plus* the telescreen that made the Big Brother society.

HARRISON: Now people crave the telescreen, in effect inducing their own surveillance.

STOLL: Let me just make sure people understand the state of the art on the Internet as it relates to this topic. First, I cannot trace your individual activities without your identifying yourself to me. All I can do is trace the activities of your computer. This is an important distinction, particularly as it relates to law enforcement. Having identified you, I could then look at your cookies on the hard drive and see which other Web sites you'd visited. There isn't a one-to-one correspondence between the computer and the individual in the vast majority of cases. Households often have one computer, but three people use it.

WESTIN: All that will change. In a few years we will have biometric identifiers when people turn on their computers—*that* world will be the new world.

STOLL: I'd [illegible] further out than a few years, but my point is that today I can identify the computer and I cannot identify the user. The second point is, whereas it's true that I have enough computer power to store, reduce, and study all of the static information that I put there, my [illegible] computer power on earth to [illegible] surveillance [illegible] So I've [illegible] to [illegible] to [illegible] to

will grow exponentially. Today's terabyte is tomorrow's megabyte.

[illegible] Internet will remain law-proof is one of the silliest notions ever that we have one million lawyers who will help make sure that doesn't happen. One thing that is dramatically different is that the consumer traditionally had very little power over the collection of his or her information and its use by business. The law said that this information is protected by the First Amendment and it belongs to the businesses that collect them, and the individual has no property rights to the consumer information that's collected. This is all changing. That information [illegible] and how that a whole new



industry of infomediaries and others are appear[illegible] We [illegible] and we will parcel it out at fees that we will then [illegible] and [illegible] after [illegible] all [illegible]

of it and we'll get one third of it. The era in which your personal information was a free good in the old economic sense, like free air and free water once were, is no longer here.

One more point. We [illegible] talk about all people and how they feel about this. In fact, we find a solid division of the American public into three groups on this issue. You have privacy fundamentalists, about 25 percent, who are very worried about privacy, don't want to give out their consumer information, and would reject discounts. At the opposite end you have about 20 percent whom we call the privacy unconcerned. Couldn't care less. Give them five cents off, they'll give you their complete genealogical history—no problem. In between you've got the 55 percent we call the privacy pragmatists. And the questions that concern them are: What benefit are you giving me, the consumer? What's the risk I run that you're going to misuse my information? What safeguards do you promise? If they trust you, they'll give you the information; if they don't trust you but want the benefit, then they'll bring law and the government into it and say, I want the benefit, but the risk is too great for me to trust you, so I want a statute to protect me.

[illegible] My sense is that the cat is out of the bag.

Q: Why do you say that?

MR. [illegible]: Because to function in the information economy these days, you're compelled to provide your personal information. I'll give you an example. At first I did not want to join the local affinity card program at my local supermarket, thinking, Why do I want to tell Safeway how much yogurt I'm buying? But I soon recognized that if I had the affinity card, I would get a 5% percent discount on a lot of items. It didn't take long for me to sign up.

KESSLER: All you're saying is that you put an economic value on your privacy and that it mattered to you when you weighed getting the benefit. I don't agree that everybody is going to fall into line for the discount or the opportunity.

[illegible] The right to withhold your personal information is an important one that we should protect, but every time the underlying technological trends are such that we will end up [illegible] a great deal of information simply to participate in the economy.

[illegible] your example of the corner grocery store and contrast it with the Internet. The Internet is actually very liberating, because unlike the corner grocery store, which you have to go to, the Internet allows you to steer clear of those merchants who don't have a privacy policy [illegible].

[illegible] suggesting that consumers will

1999: THE YEAR IN ELECTRONIC PRIVACY

JANUARY

• Intel announces its new Pentium III computer chip will come with a "Processor Serial Number" that will allow software programs and Web-based services to track and identify individual computers. Privacy groups threaten a boycott, Intel agrees to ship the chips with the PSN "deactivated."

• The FDIC releases banking regulations that would require banks to closely monitor customer accounts and report suspicious activity. After receiving 25,000 e-mails and letters protesting the regulations, the FDIC abandons them.

FEBRUARY

• The motor vehicles bureaus of several states come under criticism for selling driver's license photos to a New Hampshire company attempting to build a national photo database. The company later reveals it received financial and technical assistance on the project from the U.S. Secret Service.

MARCH

• A software consultant discovers the existence of a "Globally Unique Identifier" in Microsoft's Windows 98 operating system; the GUID is attached to every document a user creates with Microsoft applications and is also included in a cookie used to identify users every time they visit the Microsoft Web site. Microsoft calls the GUID a mistake and immediately releases deactivation software.

APRIL

• The FAA unveils a new airport security program that requires airlines to conduct computerized profiling of all passengers on domestic flights. The Computer Assisted Passenger Screening program software links all airline passenger information and selects certain passengers to be detained, questioned, and searched, according to classified FAA criteria.

• A Canadian software company releases a program that can secretly "reactivate" and read a previously deactivated Processor Serial Number on the new Intel Pentium III chip.

JUNE

• Consumer privacy groups raise objections to the merger of leading Internet [illegible] Abacus's database of the real names, addresses [illegible] million households.

JULY

• A New York grand jury rules that police can install "pen registers" (wiretap devices that monitor the numbers dialed on a phone line) without a search warrant.

• The Secretary of Commerce [illegible] use of DES Evidence concluded that [illegible] probably could not break a DES-encoded message in a reasonable amount of time, [illegible] the world's fastest computer would take [illegible] years to break a DES-encoded message.

AUGUST

• Controversy arises over Amazon.com's new feature, called "purchase circles," which allows the public to view [illegible] based purchasing records [illegible] income, such as geographical area, [illegible] sexual orientation, [illegible] computer platform [illegible].

• The [illegible] CALEA wiretap standards proposed by the FBI (acting under powers accorded them by the Communications Assistance for Law Enforcement Act of 1994) that redesign portions of the nation's telecommunications infrastructure to facilitate federal electronic surveillance.

SEPTEMBER

• Prompted by concern over reports of supermarkets developing detailed databases [illegible] the Federal Trade Commission [illegible] the issue of online profiling. [illegible] the FTC's report [illegible] Congress [illegible] Online Privacy Protection Act of 1999 [illegible].

OCTOBER

• The Australian inspector general of intelligence and security [illegible] existence of the Echelon global spying [illegible] world governments. Echelon reportedly [illegible].

•

Portability and Accountability Act [illegible].

NOVEMBER

• [illegible] duced by RealNetworks routinely collected personal information [illegible] and [illegible] without [illegible] warrant. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] privacy policy. That presupposes they will put privacy ahead of price or selection and will expect companies to honor their policies.

[illegible]: Is there any kind of privacy protection that you could not overcome, Mark, working for the Justice Department?

CASTILLO: There's virtually none—with a court order. I think, broadly, that Alan would agree that, in the context of wiretapping, the legal framework created in 1968 has worked. You see very few illegal wiretaps by government agents, and the number of legal wiretaps dramatically dropped, partially because of the law, partially because J. Edgar Hoover finally died. There are different measures of injury, however, and this is where I part company with Alan and Michael. First there is a perception by people, perhaps not well founded, that they are being watched. As we said, there are 2,000 wiretaps a year in this country alone, by the government. There are 30 million people who believe that they've been wiretapped. We all agree that it is deeply corrosive for a society to feel as if it's being watched. And so even if the people at this table and elsewhere can put together a framework that is reasonable for controlling this great gathering of information, the perception of surveillance will be there. When it's invisible surveillance—when you can't see when you're being seen, the corrosive effect is greatly multiplied. The other problem is that the body of Internet law will be made by the United States, yet the Internet is an international phenomenon. Although ultimately phone-based, it is fundamentally unlike old Ma Bell. You can move an Internet service provider to the Caribbean or the Far East, and suddenly the United States Department of Justice or Department of the Treasury is irrelevant.

[illegible] But as a practical matter, the ISPs are not relocating their servers to the Caribbean, because it's much simpler for AOL to keep them in Virginia. Once a business reaches a certain size, it's not practical to move servers.

[illegible]: Professor Peter Swire, the Clinton administration's counselor for privacy, says that on the Internet, organizations with Web sites can be elephants or mice. Mice are very small, scurry fast, are hard to find. Elephants, on the other hand, can be seen, they're slow, and you can grab them. Let's regulate the elephants, he suggests, the [illegible] and let the mice in the Caribbean and the Far East, [illegible] go. I think we want to set norms and standards, pay attention to the companies that have 18 million people on their server, not to one guy in his garage who offers what seems to be a tremendous [illegible].

[illegible]: The trouble is, mice can cause a lot of trouble. We've got people spreading viruses, professional rumor-mongers, for-hire spooks—lots of mice out there.

DATA, PREDESTINATION, AND A MAN WITH A CERTAIN CHIN

[illegible]: Alan, I think you're very optimistic about the ability of government to solve this problem. Even if legislation is passed to deal with the most problematic areas—health records, for example—the underlying trend is for information to become more and more accessible. Government won't deal with that. We have to ask ourselves what this means for our society, because America was founded on the notion that you could start anew. If you didn't like Europe or the East Coast, you could move west. You could leave behind old preconceptions or truths—that you were a disbeliever or in debt—and try again. That was the allure of the frontier.

HARRISON: Where there was no information about you.

MOYNIHAN: Exactly. The actual frontier is long gone, of course. Frederick Jackson Turner's famous 1893 speech to the American Historical Association told us that. But as Turner expected, the idea of the frontier endured. Jack Kerouac found it years later in the freedom of the American road, and, ironically, many West Coasters and other pioneers believed they had found it in cyberspace. Except it turns out that cyberspace lives in computers, which also are good at searching and remembering.

WESTIN: It's more complicated. With the frontier, you left the community that knew you, but the minute you got to the new community, you were known. There was a second historical trend, the anonymization of urban life. In many ways it's a more powerful tradition. As the famous German expression put it, "City air makes you free."

MOYNIHAN: That's true. People historically left the small community to find freedom in cities, but as we've moved into a global village (as opposed to a city), where information is known about you, I think we are fundamentally leaving behind that era when you could reinvent yourself by moving—when, in effect, you could vote with your feet.

CASTILLO: Part of what's frightening is that we have information gathering and storage ability that is international in scope and therefore beyond laws, either good or bad, and follows you wherever you go. You'll have a paradoxical and perhaps unprecedented situation, unlike any [illegible] on the frontier, in which cyber

will be known about you by people who don't know you at all.

MAYER-SCHÖNBERGER: The risk is that we could become a society in which your future is predetermined from birth. When a lot of you come, informationally, from a certain neighborhood, that information becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, defining the sort of offers that you receive, your credit opportunities, your school choices, even the banner ads you see when you get to a certain Web site. When the scope of your future is largely limited by information in your profile at each stage of your life.

HARRISON: Data predestination.

SEGAL: Again, we're stating the situation in the worst possible light. Go back to the results of our user surveys. People see the Internet more than anything as an opportunity to receive more relevant information and more targeted goods and services. Then quality of life goes higher. Our unprecedented prosperity for the last ten-odd years has been because we've driven so much inefficiency out of our society. A lot of that has resulted from personalization.

HARRISON: Ron, is there any information about people you won't take, even when it's offered voluntarily?

SEGAL: We only take information that we ask for, so by definition we don't take information that we don't ask for. For example, we have a site called Lycos Zone, which is designed for children under the age of twelve. We don't collect any information on kids in Lycos Zone.

HARRISON: I'm just trying to find blocks of information that are sacred.

SEGAL: First of all, passing anonymous information content through is different from passing personalized information. We don't distribute any personalized information about anybody without that person's consent. Now, for aggregated blocks of anonymous data, we routinely disclose the results of a month of search queries—strings—what the most popular search terms were in the last month, that kind of thing. It's that's all anonymous, and I don't think it's relevant to the discussion. But one problem we have is trying to figure out how the First Amendment applies to all of this.

MAYER-SCHÖNBERGER: I expect that ultimately some of this information will be protected. That is also seeing to be incredibly important in the twenty-first century.

WESTIN: We should recognize, though, that there's no information, no matter how personal or how sensitive, that some individuals will not disclose in what they think are [illegible] protective context. For example, in [illegible] rooms people share cancer experiences with people they trust, because they, too, had the disease. There's no such thing as informa-

[illegible]

ments based on it.

[illegible]

[illegible] Ron, I'll bet the search tool you're going to sell will know which of the people on your network who are interested in lupus. Of course, I am going to take that data and correlate it with other data to determine whom I'm going to sell insurance to.

[illegible]

[illegible] Ron, if an individual buys one of Lycos's personalized services, then you could know the person right down to his or her medical history.

SEGAL: You could.

HARRISON: I grant you that the information is not going to be perfect, but I think insurance companies have that way of determining it.

WESTIN: Under state law you have to have personalized information to make an underwriting decision. It may even be legal to use my race for [illegible] but I can't. Under the way the law is written, the law would not allow me, Alan Westin, on your life insurance policy, based on assumptions from which Web sites I visit.

[illegible] I suppose I have to [illegible] the information to make it accurate.

[illegible]

HARRISON: Why?

[illegible]

[illegible]

own financial services, as well as insurance operations, to whom that data might be extremely

WESTIN: By the perception of the marketplace and because of the privacy advocates' vigilance. When a conglomerate like Citigroup was formed, they issued a privacy promise, which they registered with the federal regulators as

will never use health information from our Travelers subsidiary for any decision that has to

they would have *loved* to put that information together. They did it because of the perception that they would not have happy customers if they used people's health information that way.

There's a tendency to gloss over what really goes on, because underwriting does involve information from the medical information bureau, which may not be an Internet-driven thing but is a similarly large database.

You're talking about the MIB database,

have turned you down. So if they declined you

that's evident when you apply to another life insurance company.

nless forbidden by the marketplace or

his information, then customers

t information that I

his information. I don't even need a court order. I don't

MOYNIHAN: There's also informal cooperation between law enforcement and business.

there's obviously going to be a tremendous change. A story appeared today in the *New York Times* about a rapist. They have his semen specimen; they don't know who he is but they know what he's like. Imagine the implications of that.

every one of the 400,000 arrests they make every year. Eventually they would build up an enormous profile of arrested persons.

premise that crime scene DNA is a piece of private information. I would say that such information is public. Somebody has committed a crime and has left the equivalent of a fingerprint.

MOYNIHAN: But it's an opening to a potentially invasive search to find the matching strand.

COSTELLO: Let's say that the DNA shows that the man has poor eyesight and a certain type of

provide alibis.

Yes, the same way a witness who saw the crime would be. I think the person wore glasses and had a cleft chin. It's not any different from the fact that law enforcement pursues any clue. But the problem is the data bank. Will we allow government to create stored DNA databases on

government has captured

processes W-2 statements, that data is available for other purposes.

the W-2 statements have people's

and addresses and recently that data has

to fluctuate, and the trend is for it to recede.

prosecuted or arrested or purged have been gay males. Is this because gay males like pornography

who law enforcement has gone after. We could talk about a good legal framework and a bad one,

washed away by the bigger trends of prolif-
raphy, the global nature of the Internet and the
fact that information flows

I would [illegible] point that we are currently at peace in the United States, and we do not have any of the pressures toward relinquishing [illegible] play were we engaged in a war. I think the historical evidence is pretty strong that when you have a major war going on there is a substantial transfer of rights from the individual to the government, which is charged with [illegible] ning war. We are fortunate now that we don't have that problem, and there is some reason to have been a distribution of computing power to individuals so that they now can run software to protect their privacy, and so forth. But we have to keep in mind that if you move into an environment in which the government is threatened externally, some of that freedom could be retracted.

WESTIN: If terrorism in the United States were to get really serious, the FBI director could say, "You know, we're going to need the encryption keys, and we'll set up a public key system. We'll give it to courts, and we'll give it to the Department of Commerce." He'd argue that the ability to [illegible] the street crimes will [illegible] be a very powerful argument. With [illegible] saliva [illegible]

It would [illegible] down. Scruples would vanish. We need to remember that we [illegible] that is the most relevant [illegible] yet privacy is [illegible]

[illegible] us that [illegible] generally [illegible] more like [illegible] the tools that Ron doesn't think about [illegible] ment use. Things like [illegible] their [illegible] flying [illegible]

UNKNOWN AT LAST?



[illegible] have anonymizers and encryption techniques, [illegible] your want, and piss it on to you, without

WESTIN: With or without a court order.

COSTELLO: I don't find I'm terribly concerned about so-called preference information.

I just don't care whether you know that I neighbors, the fact that people I don't know living on my street know my children very well, and so forth. But I've been through so many back-

WESTIN: There's no information about me that I'll not willingly reveal to the right person. I'll tell my medical practitioner anything about me if it will help my care. I'll tell my insurance compa- information is going to be revealed. Our surveys show that people are most sensitive about financial and medical information, and financial protect your information vulnerability?

I always look to see who's asking me for patronize an establishment that asks me for information I'm not prepared to give. For example, it annoys the hell out of me that an insur- whether I'm entitled to get some king at my medical history. But I understand that's the world of health care today, and I

u, Michael?

rder to get me to answer that ething. But seriously, perhaps from having become aware that there is no privacy. As Mark

HARKIN: You're trying to hide in plain sight?

speak. Which I think may be ■

OUR MAN ON CAPRI

Remembering Graham Greene

By Michael Korda

Greene on Capri: A Memoir by Shirley Hazzard. Farrar Straus and Giroux. 128 pages. $22.



Certain figures are so mettled, remote that even at a human distance—say, the distance at which one shakes hands—they remain unfamiliar, or at any rate less familiar and approachable than their photographs. Charles de Gaulle, for example, reminded one of Everest, and not only because of his height. Laurence Olivier and Ralph Richardson, like chameleons, and also perhaps like all great actors, determinedly eluded any precise description of themselves. The well-publicized recent problems of Edmund Morris when faced with the task of writing the official biography of Ronald Reagan (another actor) painfully demonstrate the difficulty of getting to know any public figure well enough to write about him or her. The closer you think you are, the farther off the person seems to be when you sit down to start writing, as poor Morris discovered.

Writers, like actors, are hard to pin down on paper, since they live to some degree in their own writing, which is very often designed to create a quite different person from the one they actually, in real life, appear to be. It is doubtful, for example, whether meeting Tolstoy would have told us as much about him as reading Tolstoy's work would. Hence the disappointment that people often feel when meeting a famous writer. Those who met Evelyn Waugh usually remember only his rudeness, his Edwardian dislike of Americans, the English lower classes, and most other writers, and his [illegible] when drinking.

Waugh once made a large dinner party at my Uncle Alex's home memorable by [illegible] protested against being seated next to my aunt-to-be Alexa, the future Lady Korda, by saying that he did not wish [illegible] This does not prevent me from [illegible] class Englishman determined to be [illegible] would be only too happy to be seated [illegible]

[illegible] Evelyn Waugh [illegible] English reticence, a stuffiness wholly different from Waugh's [illegible] time like a comic and delightful figure, with many of the national characteristics [illegible]

[illegible]

Michael Korda is [illegible] & Schuster and is the author of [illegible] books, including Another Life: A Memoir and Other Lives.

...perfect specimen of the type at the old Hotel Wing of Antibes, it was easy to detect Greene naturally tall, stooped Englishman, instantly recognizable the world over by his height, his two-fisted cocktail drinking, his hunting and his accent that Greene's friend Evelyn Waugh once imitated to perfection: "Greene, a French gentleman." Greene traveled all over the world but never lived like, but he never "went native"; whether in deepest Africa, Mexico just after the revolution, Indochina, or France he was always an Englishman and never pretended to be anything else. In Antibes and Paris, surrounded by first-rate French cooking, he yearned for "sausages and mashed potatoes," and on those occasions when he returned to England he luxuriated in English beer and heavy meals at places like Simpson's in the Strand or Rule's, where he ate (at the former) its famous roast beef and Yorkshire pudding and (at the latter) the equally famous steak pie. He had an English schoolboy's sweet tooth (the bane of English dental health) and could write with deep nostalgia about Smarties, an English precursor to M&M's, which even play a role in the plot of one of his later novels, and which Greene mentioned in almost every letter he wrote to his friend Evelyn Waugh.

Of course exoticism, like acting, is a trick, a way of re-creating oneself as someone different, and Greene's most important model for his own most protean character was complicated by several factors. One was Greene's early childhood. He was the fourth child and fourth son of the headmaster of a famous English public school, and he grew up in the midst of a large family of brothers and sisters. Greene's parents were Victorian mandarins, firmly ensconced in the hierarchy of their profession. He hated the institution of boarding schools and brothels, as well as the equally [illegible] Victorian [illegible] and hypocrisy [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] and

embellish it it kept journalists and
icemen away from the truth, and
o can say that he was wrong? Certainly not me.

It is perhaps unfortunate that Shirley Hazzard met Greene on Capri in the late 1960's, at that int in his life when his anger at nerica over the war in Vietnam nd much else), his mild, but increasing, resentment at being frozen t of the Nobel Prize he clearly deved because one member of the resented Greene's Catholicism and 's early left-wing ideas, and any mber of other annoyances—cluding what he called, in a letter ne, "the incurable disease of old e"—had made him mildly querus and increasingly prone to those all eccentricities that come naturlly with age. The Greene who had ritten the script for *The Third Man* ho was as much at home on my ncle Alex's yacht in the south of ance as he was in the opium dens Saigon, and whose biting wit, inense sense of fun, and huge social nergy made him that rarest of bengs, a literary genius and *un homme du monde*—both a deeply serious man nd the life of the party—had bome with age a heavier figure, more eeply embedded in his habits, trying keep his interest in life going by equent travel and an involvement unlikely (and all too often unromising) causes—supporting the uthoritarian left-wing president of anama, fighting municipal corruption in Nice, playing practical jokes those supremely earnest Americans President Jimmy Carter and the tate Department.

The Greene that comes across in he pages of Hazzard's short book is at mes infuriating, crotchety, and sad ut still hugely interesting, a man of normous talent whose best work is ehind him but who still feels the need o soldier on, writing those five hundred words a day (never more, never ess, ending often in the middle of a entence) in tiny, cramped handwriting, a program that had been the marvel of self-discipline of his adult fe. Once he had screwed the cap back n his fountain pen and put his little eather notebook in his pocket, he was

to catch Greene in a rare good mood

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

"[A] perfect literary thriller with a bitter lingering 'afterburn' indeed."*



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COLIN HARRISON

"The handy cliche alleging that a thriller is so good it transcends its genre has rarely been truer than in the case of this breathtakingly suspenseful meditation on the interwoven [illegible]ities of life [illegible]

"Compelling. Harrison has written another [illegible]

FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX

OUR DAILY BREAD

On the triumph of American gastrosophy

By Frederick Kaufman

[illegible] pages, $5.00.

I [illegible]

tence of a collection of more than 700 titles. The clerk handed me the list and shook his head, perhaps wondering whether ever in the history of bookstore databases there had been such a textual purge.

A steady ernest of diet books, I wanted to tell him, has long been symptomatic of this century's publishing practices, at least since the days when Emerson, Thoreau, and company were furiously scribbling curricular content for the next century's Am Lit courses. Those who shudder at the sight of Barry Sears's *Mastering the Zone* and Suzanne Somers's *Get Skinny on Fabulous Food* on today's bestseller lists should keep in mind that neither *Walden* nor *Moby Dick* could boast sales anywhere near Sylvester Graham's *Discourses on a Sober and Temperate Life* or Marx Edgeworth Lazarus's *Passional Hygiene, and Natural Medicine Embracing the Harmonies of Man with His Planet*.



A raft of academics have expended their career vigorously accounting for the sudden bloom of American Transcendentalism, the strange, homegrown spiritual product that proclaims every individual's ability to absorb and secrete omnipotent power. But who has paid proper attention to the far more popular and, arguably, more influential diet books of 150 years ago? Transcendentalists have long been enshrined in the cultural pantheon while their cohorts, the overtly American prophets of the stomach, have been unfairly neglected, even shortchanged. Who were these newfangled figures of cultural dominance who identified themselves as founders of a social movement rooted in [illegible]

place where physical, mental, and spiritual perfection meet. "Fleeting but all-powerful," the Zone redefines the Transcendental dreams Americans have held for themselves since the time of Emerson, the threshold of "that mysterious but very real state in which your body and your mind work together at their ultimate best." Of course, fasting works just as well.

The secret to entering this enteric utopia turns out to be a kind of hormone called an eicosanoid. And since an eicosanoid is not a food group but a molecule, it is just as easily obtained from Burger King and Jack in the Box as it is from oatmeal and sardines. Best of all, these eicosanoids are not only the panacea for obesity but for cancer, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, HIV, PMS, eczema, and jet lag, depression and alcoholism—indeed, for "virtually every disease state."

This kind of medical monomania has a long history and a fancy name. Single-etiology was Enlightenment shorthand for the proposition that there must be one single cause for all sickness. Driven out of orthodox science at the end of the eighteenth century, single-etiology is still in vogue among modern diet mavens. In *Eat Right 4 Your Type*, Peter J. D'Adamo asserts that "your blood type is the key that unlocks the door to the mysteries of health, disease, longevity, physical vitality, and emotional strength." Robert Atkins, whose *New Diet Revolution* remained number 1 on the *New York Times* "Advice, How-to and Miscellaneous" paperback bestseller list for 66 weeks, and who loves to proclaim (as he does in the earlier book *Dr. Atkins' Diet Revolution*) that "some [illegible] *Eat Right 4 Your Type*."

Right in line with this great tradition of all-encompassing theories of everything, Atkins proposes that the way we eat is to blame not only for how overweight Americans are but for a host of disorders familiar to readers of pharmaceutical-side-effect warnings:

> [illegible] and [illegible] sweetness, forgetfulness, insomnia, worrying, [illegible] palpitations, [illegible] mood [illegible] and [illegible] have been attributed [illegible] stress, crying spells, [illegible] nausea, [illegible] for breath. . .

Atkins's patients "have gained energy, cheerfulness, self-confidence. They're new people." Of course, Robert Pritikin preaches a diametrically opposed program that claims to have the same benefits: people "experience a significant improvement in weight, vitality, and clarity of mind. Many feel more optimistic and positive about themselves and the future."

One hundred and seventy-three years ago, James Johnson outlined these same claims in his popular "Essay on Indigestion." He was, he noted,

> convinced that many strange antipathies, hiccups, capricious tempers and eccentricities, which so much excited and elicited the obliquities of the *intellect*, have their source in *corporeal* disorder.

And Johnson was only confirming the decade old wisdom of Thomas Trotter:

> The human stomach is most exquisitely endued by nature, with the most complex properties of any in the body, and it unites a series of sympathy between the corporeal and mental parts, of more exquisite qualifications than even the brain itself.

Thus, from the days when Federalists ruled the earth, there has been no mind-body problem in this country. In fact, technically speaking, there *is* no American mind, only an American body—that is, an American stomach. Mental health depends upon gastric health. Every ailment stems from improper aliment. All this explains why Americans, more ardently religious than ever before, don't bother with church attendance. In the age of biotech miracles, salvation resides in our molecules. And just in case your spiritual (that is, intestinal) software malfunctions, Sears provides "Technical Support" in one of his appendices, replete with an 800

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Again, we're not dieting. We're exercising our God-given American

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own unique connection with uni-

versal Love." And so it is that the

dietary koans these best-selling au

In the latest Sunni Emerson

Thoreau will be known only as the

shadowy precursors of Sears and

Somers.

privatized perfectionism, it i

Suzanne Somers who descends from

the clouds to that televised

Promised Land, the Home Shopping

Network. Our greatest indication

that "the future harmony" is upon us

prophetess, our luminous spirit in

the electronic flesh.

Somers's Transcendental Zone is

al, economic, and domestic bliss

meticulously documented on every

produced page of her clovingly

warm and fuzzy modern gastrosophi-

stuffed zucchini flowers" or her "dar-

granddaughter Daisy." "I can't

give my home phone number to

ne," she laments, and we al-

believe her.

we can achieve intimacy through

est miracle in a long line of edible



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The So-Called "Peace Process"

Does it lead down the road to another Holocaust?

Israel was founded fifty-one years ago. It has been a fixture in our lives for all of that time. It has played and continues to play a role—in our emotional lives, economically, politically, and militarily—way beyond its size and its population. Whatever our personal feelings and background, life without Israel is almost unimaginable. But there is a very real possibility that, within a time not too long from now, Israel will no longer exist, that it will be destroyed in a Holocaust even more terrible than the Holocaust of the Second World War, which killed six million Jews.

What are the facts?

Victimized by Arab Myths. Israel is the only country in the world whose legitimacy, whose "right to exist", has always been questioned. From its very beginning, from before its birth, Israel was surrounded by mortal enemies,single-mindedly obsessed with its destruction. The very day of its birth, in the truncated and minuscule territory assigned to it by the United Nations,six Arab armies invaded the newborn state. In what was clearly a biblical miracle, the invading hordes were defeated by the ragtag Israeli army.

In 1967, the same aggressors launched another attack against Israel from the north (Syria), from the south (Egypt), and from the east (Jordan). The Six Day War resulted in a complete rout of the Arabs, and a victory for Israeli arms that will be studied in war colleges for centuries to come.

Unable to vanquish Israel on the battlefield, the Arabs launched a propaganda war that has been very successful, and which the Jews (despite their reputation for being so smart) have clearly and irretrievably lost.

Among the many myths propagated by the Arabs are that there is such a thing as a Palestinian nation (it's a concept that is not more than 40 years old); that the Israelis (Jews) are "occupiers" (if they were, who would be the sovereign that they displaced?); that Jerusalem is Islam's "third holiest city" (it's never once mentioned in the Koran, but hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible); the transformation of the age-old provinces of Judea/Samaria into the "West Bank"; the concept of "settlements" (with the connotation of illegality), and much more.

Israel — Utterly Vulnerable. These and other myths are what fuel the insistence of the Arabs, of most of the world, and, yes, also of the United States, that Israel allow itself to be dismembered and to turn part or even most of its tiny territory over to the "Palestinians." All concerned know well—and it has been acknowledged by our military leadership—that Israel would be utterly indefensible, at the mercy of its implacable enemies, if it were to divest itself of the Jordan Valley, of the "West Bank", of the Gaza Strip, and of the Golan Heights. Why then does the world insist that Israel make itself so utterly vulnerable? Does anybody really believe that the "Palestinians", or any of the Arabs, would be appeased, that they would reconcile themselves to the existence of a diminished Israel, even if Israel were to yield everything, turn the whole country over to the Arabs, except perhaps Tel Aviv and its suburbs? Everybody knows the answer. It would be an emphatic "NO", because the very existence of Israel, in whatever reduced territory, is an intolerable insult to the Muslim Arabs, for whom Israel must be rubbed out regardless of the sacrifices to be brought.

> "By its pious insistence on 'justice for the Palestinians' and pursuit of the 'peace process', by fomenting and profiting from the buildup of weapons of mass destruction solely destined for the destruction of Israel, the world actively promotes this second Holocaust."

Why does the world focus on the spurious claims of the "Palestinians", an artificially created nationality that never in recorded history had an identity or country of their own? Why is there no clamor that the French and Spanish give an independent country to their Basque minorities? How about the Kurds, who are under the heavy thumbs of the Iranians, the Turks, the Iraqis, and the Syrians? How about the Tibetans, subjugated by the Chinese; and so many others? Nobody cares. Nobody wants to "liberate" them. It's only the Jews who are being asked to dismember their tiny country, less than half of the size of San Bernardino County in California.

The Arab countries (and Iran) are frantically arming themselves with the most dreadful weapons of mass destruction. As the world knows, it is for one purpose only—their only political objective and their relentless obsession—namely the destruction of Israel. Two or three nuclear weapons would wipe Israel off the map once and for all. Retaliation by Israel, the destruction of major Arab cities, and millions of Arab casualties, would not deter the Muslim fanatics from pursuing their goal. For them, it would be a small price to pay. With Israel dismembered, with five or six Arab states poised to attack with weapons of mass destruction, with 40,000 Palestinian police armed to the teeth, in Israel's midst, can anybody really doubt that a second Holocaust, even more terrible than the first one, is just about upon us? During the Nazi Holocaust, the whole world stood silently by and didn't lift a finger to prevent the most gruesome slaughter of innocents in the history of the world. In fact, many who were given the opportunity gleefully and enthusiastically participated in the bloodbath. By its pious insistence on "justice for the Palestinians" and pursuit of the "peace process", by fomenting and profiting from the buildup of weapons of mass destruction solely destined for the destruction of Israel, the world actively promotes this second Holocaust. Deep down inside, does the world really want the Jews to live or to disappear?

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IN PRAISE OF FREEDOM

By Will Durant

It is a marvel inadequately noted that the contemporary victory of conservatism in the politics and economies of the world has been accompanied by the triumph of liberalism in religion and morals, in science and philosophy, in literature and art.

We have selected for our rulers seemen who reverently represent the established gods of industry, and we have put behind us, for the while, all thought of experiment in the relations of master and man. We have conferred mystic popularity upon officials whose only virtue is their timidity; while our scorn of rebels and reformers is so great that we have ceased to persecute them. The capitals and governments of the world are in the hands of caution, and change comes over them only in the night, unseen.

Yet, bewilderingly simultaneous with this virtuous avoidance of the new in the official world, behold in our cities such a riot of moral and literary innovation, such an exuberant rejection of ancient faith and discipline, as makes every gray head shake with sociological tremors, and every aged finger point to corrupt Imperial Rome. Science thinks it has won its battle with the antediluvians, in the exhilaration of its victory it marches gayly into a mechanical dogmatism that does justice to everything but life. Literature violates every rule and every precedent, the

perhaps even our moral freedom is a

should resist wholesale moralization by

ming and consoling liquors because some

there is no liberty. [. . .]

brave religion of liberty?

natural, and how long can it maintain

In human affairs (to spoil a perfect phrase of Santayana's) everything ar-

is artificial. Like language and theolo-

assimilation; rapidly we all become

But though in the secret sanctuaries of our souls we are lawless savages, we are not indisposed by nature to a moderate measure of spontaneous order and decency. Society is older than man, and older than the vertebrates. The protozoa have their colonies, with a division of labor between reproductive and nutritive cells; and the ants and bees bring this specialization of function to the point of physiologically differentiating the organism for its social task. Even the carnivores, whose tusks and hides and claws are individualistic substitutes for the strength and security of social order, include those gentle eyed dogs who can be more sociable than a salesman and more loyal than a mad editor. [. . .] The brotherhood of man is in this sense as old as history, it vitalizes a thousand secret societies and forms of fellowship, there hardly lives the brute with soul so dead that he has not thrilled at times with a sense of his almost physical solidarity with mankind. [. . .]

Finally, society itself, supported on these instinctive and economic props, develops in the individual certain social habits which become as powerful as any second nature, and constitute a pledge of order far more reliable than law. The longer we live the more gregarious we become; the more susceptible to the opinions of our neighbors; the more imitative and respectable; the more attached to custom and convention, the more reconciled to those restraints upon desire which make civilization depend upon habit rather than upon force.

Every organized psychological power strives to complete this taming and socialization of the individual. The schools set up, almost at his birth, a bombardment of moral exhortations from which some gentle influence is more even when their theological basis has passed away. As parental and ecclesiastical authority wane, the school replaces them more and more; it pretends to prepare the individual for economic and artistic victories; but quietly and subtly it molds him, as Aristotle advised, "to suit the form of government under which he lives", it points into receptive consciousness the political ideals and moral customs of his group, of history with such relentless iteration the nation's past that the young graduate is ready to spit his neighbors the sacrifice for the enhancement his country's power. If the school fails in this socializing strategy, or the individual eludes it by immigrating when adult, the press will carry on the work mechanical invention co-operates with urban aggregation to bring every mind within reach of that ancient thing called "news," and that delicate indoctrination which lurks between the lines.

When these molding forces are viewed in summary, the drive to good behavior seems so irresistible that one might reasonably question the necessity of laws that would regulate morality. In a large measure it is society that exists, and not the individual; [. . .] By biological heredity we are bound to our animal past; by social heredity—through our imitative and educational absorption of the traditions and morals of our group—we are bound to our human past; and the forces of stability, so rooted in our impulses and our habits, leave precious little in us that requires the unnatural morality of the state.

Since these forming influences act upon us in our tenderest and most suggestible years, we hardly overcome them except at the cost of a struggle that involves our very sanity. A miserable nostalgia visits us when we depart from the *mores* of our country and our time; and when we settle down into it is most often into one or another of the grooves that the past has dug. Contented people are usually those who adopt without question the manners, customs, morals, and grammar of their group, becoming indistinguishable molecules in the social mass, and sinking into a restful peace of self-surrender that rivals the lassitude of love. The greater the society, the stronger will be the pressure upon the individual to divest himself of individuality even in those fashionable novelties which delight the modest soul because they are felt to be not really innovations, but respectful variations on an ancestral theme. In the final result a large population becomes an almost immovable body, the natural conservatism of society outreaches the chan-

nism of the state. The individual, ade in the image of the whole, becames so docile and well behaved that he compulsions and punishments of w appear as a gratuitous extravagance, nd we are for a moment tempted o sign our names defiantly to the octrine of those fearful anarchists hom we exclude, or deport, or ilify, or imprison, or hang.



Let us reassure ourselves there are defects in this philosophy of freedom. For first, underestimates the violence of he strong: the same ruthless domnation that makes the state would ule with more visible and direct orce, and with more suffering and haos, if there were no state at all ivilization is in part the establishment of order and custom in he use of the weak by the strong. he precariousness of international law reveals the imminence of violence among the mighty, only little states are virtuous. [. . .] Every nvention strengthens the strong nd the unscrupulously clever in heir manipulation of the unintelligent, the scrupulous, and the eak; every development in the omplexity of life widens the gap nd makes resistance harder. It is a atter thing to realize; but society is ounded not on the ideals but on he nature of man. His ideals are as ke as not an attempt to conceal his nature from himself or from the world.

Again, the social dispositions upon hich a natural order rests are far less eeply rooted in us than those individualistic impulses of acquisition and ccumulation, of pugnacity and mastery hich underlie our economic life. Even he cry for liberty comes from a heart hat secretly hungers for power; it is ecause of that hunger in the human east of prey that liberty is limited and ound. In some measure it is the weak ho by the pressure of majority ideas ntail the freedom of the individual. est unshackled strength should so iden the gap between itself and the nfortunate that the social organism ould burst, like a growing cell, into evolution. The first condition of freeom is its limitation; life is a balance

ups in natural restraint. Free

under such national control, and every sumer should be withdrawn from the exchange by multiplying intermediaries, which threatens our economic wealth—would sprout and flourish like an unbound plant; the initiative and would be liberated rather than en- protection from the hostile lords of our distributive machinery; and free- before.

demands innovation and experiment and invention as well

onciles itself to captivity, and pace about forever on the watch for a wa and can look without remorse int longing for liberty, that we are un of imprisoning it as a pleasant sigh for a Sunday afternoon. But we our selves are caged, and do not complain the fettered beast?

There is a Chinese proverb to the ef The ancient Thurians provided a hal new laws, suggesting his fit punishmen for mutilating liberty. Our legislature thousand laws per week; if this is so, w are a nation of thieves, and we need n laws but education. Sessions of Con gress are a source of national appre present executive [Coolidge] is widel an English king, to do nothing but dra nullify should by strange chance b good?—even a good law is a law, an so far bad. There is not so sharp a con the popularity of an abstemious presi our consciences by making other peopl of honesty; we oldsters were as lax as w could afford in our guarded and impe curious youth; and when we sinne we sinned in silence, and carried pi ous faces into meeting. The growin generation is not so skilled in secrecy and likes to boast of greater crimes tha it commits. Its sins are superficial an

time; experience will make men ma-
re enough to love modesty again.
eanwhile of what moment is it that
our youth our grandmothers smoked
alodorous pipes respectably, while in
r desuetude our daughters smoke
hatever satisfies? How shall we dis-
ade youth from making *vade mecums*
whiskey flasks (whose contents they
anfully pretend to enjoy), except by
easing to forbid it? What does it mat-
r that nudity can be seen more read-
and less furtively than in our hooped
d petticoated days, that undue stim-
ation replaces morbid brooding?
abit will correct the evil gently by
lling sensitivity, and clothing will
ve to be restored to generate again
e illusions of desire.

Against this magnificent uprising of
e young the old can only think of
ws. Every timid and jealous voice
lls upon the immaculate assembly-
en of America to come to the rescue
morality. Because some sleek panders
ve made filthy lucre by exposing
od's handiwork upon the stage, tired
ople demand that policemen be em-
owered to revise all pictures and dra-
as before their public unveiling. But
e supposed the police had full pow-
to stop indecency by pre-existing
gislation. One supposed that the po-
e had the power to put an end at
ce to any spectacle that violated the
atutes against obscenity. Possibly
ere is no need to resort again to in-
scriminate prohibition; possibly pub-
opinion, if it is the public's opinion,
ould suffice to condemn excess, and
ight prove (as it does in the case of
ink) more effective than any law. It
ould stamp us indelibly as a provincial
d infantile nation if we relapsed in-
the straitjackets of Puritanism at
e very time when America begins to
eate its own literature, its own drama,
d its own art. Better a Charles II
an a Cromwell.

Luckily for us, life is on the side of
outh in these matters, and youth is
n the side of life. Our heirs may com-
it suicide, and prefer baseball to epis-
mology, and forget to say grace before
inking, but these diversions must not
bscure for us the buoyant health and
right good-nature of contemporary
dolescence. Let the young be happy;



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RÊVE HAITIEN

By Ben Fountain

In

anded like the sec

only stare at his kitchen wall

which resembled a bombed-out in-

lot, he would pick out a
bench with a view of the Palace and

ssy street kids would be

. And Mason rarely won.

nd there were

and exile of their cher-
ished president, the methodical hell

persisted; Haitians needed some
thing to keep them going, and the
games allowed him to keep a cove
the Palace the evening
the millionth dingo
government, as the diplomats an
news reports insisted on saying, th
is pays basically meaning anybod
with a gun. Word got around abo
his evening games and the stre
started bringing chess sets for him t
worked in Haitian themes: th
voodoo gods, say, or Leclerc versu
Toussaint, or Baby Doc as the Ku
and Michèle the Queen and notor
ous Macoutes in supporting role
Sometimes during these games th
crowd grew so raucous that Maso
guards. And, regardless of the game
streets after dark.

skin and bones came running to
ward him. *Blan!* the boy shoute
grinning wickedly, ve
and followed the boy to a seclude
corner of the park, a patch of tre
and scrub screening it from th
Palace. There on the bench sat
mulatto, a young Haitian wit
bronze skin, an impressive haw

se, and a black mass of hair that azed his shoulders. His T-shirt d jeans were basic street, but the acked white loafers seemed to nt at an old affluence, also an at- tude, a sexually aggressive way of e that had been abandoned some me ago. He simply pointed to the ot where Mason should sit, and ey started playing.

The mulatto took he first game in seven oves. Mason realized at with this one he as allowed to try; the ext game lasted eleven oves. "You're very ood," Mason said in rench, but the mulat- just gave a slight aranoiac twitch and set his pieces. In the ext game Mason fo- used all his mental owers, but the mulat- had a way of pinning ou down with pawns nd bishops, then heeling his knights hrough the mush of our defense. This me went to thirteen oves before Mason dmitted he was beat- n. The mulatto sat ack, eyed him a with- ring moment, then aid in English:

"All of these nights ou have been trying lose."

Mason shrugged, then began re- etting the pieces.

"I didn't think it was possible for nyone to be so stupid, even a *blan*," aid the mulatto. "You are mocking s."

"No, that's not it at all. I just elt—" Mason struggled for a polite ay to say it.

"You feel pity for us."

"Something like that."

"You want to help the Haitian eople."

"Well, that's true. I do."

"Are you a good man? A brave nan? A man of conviction?"

Mason, who had never been spo- en to in such solemn terms, needed second to process the question.

"Well, no. . . . I'm a pleasure-loving meant it.



H

Palace and [illegible] hood known as Solomon [illegible] scuttled out beyond [illegible]

[illegible] houses in [illegible] wobbly storefronts, markets, mewling beggars indolent. Through the wood smoke and the [illegible] cut exhaust the [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] the red light [illegible] ted streets. Dunes of garbage filled

by [illegible] and a bicycle [illegible] plane. The mulatto [illegible] the [illegible] and into the heat without [illegible] [illegible] the troop [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible]

"Sanctuary."

"A few corpses people out there."

[illegible] snapped the mulatto, grinding his teeth. Mason finally had [illegible] which went with [illegible]. The mulatto replied then pulled two plastic garbage bags out of the armoire.

"Ha," he announced, stepping past Mason to the bed, "is the most famous of the Haitian people."

Mason watched the mulatto [illegible] rolling rolls of canvas from the floor, stepping over the rats' nests, and laying the canvases on the bed. "Hippolyte," he said crisply to a serpentine creature with [illegible] hooked a man unfurled across the mattress. "Castera Bazile," he said next, "the crucifixion," and a Haitian angled painting of the nailed and bloodied Christ was laid over Hyppolyte's motionless snake. "Philomé Obin, *Toussaint Va Au Fort*. André Pierre. All of the Haitian masters are represented." At first the paintings had a wooden quality, and yet Mason, whose bite was imperfectly, had nearly skimmed him past art, felt confronted by something real and primal.

"Proper Haitian." The mulatto kept unrolling canvases. "Magloire, Paul Dread, Hyppolite, his famous painting of Erzulie. There is [illegible] here. Fifty thousand dollars' worth of art in this room."

Mason was [illegible] allowance for the Haitian artistic past. "How did you get it?" Mason felt obliged to ask.

"Went to Haiti." The mulatto gave him an imperious look.

"You stole it."

"Should have the coup. Most of the paintings were [illegible] might have gone up in smoke. Although I hope the bastards [illegible] the artists' paintings and [illegible] the [illegible] coup."

"Okay." Mason [illegible] speech was [illegible].

[illegible] bear this out.

[illegible]

He [illegible] shut down on itself [illegible] had something [illegible]

"All the only things of value in my country—the national treasure, what Haiti has to offer to the world. We are going to use her treasure to free her."

Mason had met his share of delusional Haitians, but here were the pictures, and here was a man with the bearing of a king. A man who'd [illegible] his best chess game in thirteen moves.

"How are you going to do that?"

"There is a receiver in Paris who makes a market in Haitian art. He is offering cash, $50,000 American if I can get the paintings to Miami. A shameful price when you consider this is our treasure. . . ." The mulatto looked toward the bed and seemed lost for a moment. "But that is the choice. The only choices we have in Haiti are bad choices."

"I guess you want the money for guns," said Mason, who'd been in-country long enough to guess. There were fantasts and rebels on every street corner.

"Certainly guns will have a role in this plan."

"You really think that's the solution?"

The mulatto laughed in his face. "Please. Have you been drinking today?"

"Well." Like all the observers, Mason was touchy about appearing naive. "It took the army a couple of million to get Aristide out, and they already had the guns. You think you can [illegible] the army with $50,000?"

"I am no American, so of course [illegible] question of [illegible] Heart and courage count for nothing, justice, *fear*. Those people in the Palace are cowards, okay? When the [illegible] starts I assure you [illegible] They will pack their [illegible] in their valises and run."

"[illegible]"

"[illegible] paintings must be returned to Miami. You are an observer, [illegible] the immigration [illegible] no will [illegible]

[illegible] through the mulatto was right: the couple [illegible] times he'd flown out, customs had waved him through as soon as he flashed his credentials.

"What makes you think you can trust me?"

"Because you lost at chess."

"Maybe I'm just bad."

"Yes, it's true, you are very bad. But no one is that bad."

Mason began to see the backward logic of it, how in a weird way the chess games were the best guarantee. This was Haitian logic, logic from the mirror's other side, also proof of how desperate the mulatto had to be.

"You must," the mulatto said in a peremptory voice, and yet his eyes were as pleading as a beggar's. "For decency's sake, you must."

Mason turned as if to study the canvases, but he was thinking about the worst thing that had happened to him that day. He'd been driving his truck through La Salme, the festering salt-marsh slum that stretched along the bay like a mile-wide lesion splitting the earth. At his approach, a thin woman with blank eyes had risen from her squat and held her baby toward him—begging, he thought at first, playing on his pity to shake loose some change, and then he saw the strange way the baby's head lolled back, the gray underpallor of its ropy skin. The knowledge came on like a slow electric shock: *dead*, that baby was dead. But the woman said nothing as he eased past. She simply held out her baby in silent witness, and Mason couldn't look at her, he'd had to turn away. With the embargo all the babies were dying now.

"Okay," he said, surprised at the steadiness of his voice. "I'll do it."

It turned out that he wasn't really a doctor. He'd had two years of medical school at the University of Haiti before being expelled for leading an anti-Duvalier protest, "a stupid little thing," as he described it; he'd done much worse, he said, and never gotten caught. As far as Mason could tell he eked out a living as a *doktè fèy*, a kind of roving leaf doctor an

it-rate *houngan* who happened to ave a grounding in Western medal science.

He'd cached stolen paintings all ver town. Mason never knew when 'd turn up with the next batch, a ndle of wry Stephanes or ethereal agloires to be added to the contrand in Mason's closet. But it was alays after dark, almost always on ghts when the shooting was worst. e'd hear a single knock and crack pen the door to find the mulatto anding there with a green trash g, his hair zapping off in all direcons, eyes pinwheeling like a nkie's. Mason would give him a eer and they'd look at the paintgs, the mulatto tutoring him on aitian art and history.

"Something incredible is happeng here," he might say as they sat in ason's kitchen drinking beer, udying pictures of demons and mbies and saints. "Something vil, a rebirth of our true nature, hich is shown so clearly in the iracle of Haitian art. *'Ici la renaisnce,'* how strange that this was the ame of the bar where Hyppolite as discovered. *Ici la renaissance*—it true, a rebirth is coming in the orld, a realization that the material not enough, that we must bring qual discipline to the spiritual as ell. And Haiti will be at the center this renaissance—this is the reaon for my country, the only slave volt to triumph in the history of he world. God wanted us free beause He has a plan."

He could spiel in this elevated ay for hours, forging text in his ipped, precise, crunchy English like professor delivering a formal lecure. If Mason kept popping beers ey'd eventually reach the point here paintings were scattered all ver the house; then the mulatto ould pace from room to room exlaining tricks of perspective and oloration, giving historical refernce to certain details. "But the ream is dying," he told Mason one ight. "Those criminals in the alace are killing us. As long as they ave the power there will be no reaissance."

"They're tough," Mason agreed. They've got all that drug money backing them up. The CIA too, probably."

"But they're cowards. Fate demands that we win."

He wouldn't tell Mason his name; he seemed to operate out of an inflated sense of the threat he posed to the regime. Some nights Mason was sure he'd fallen in with a lunatic, but then he'd think about the chess, the reams of Baudelaire and Goethe the man could quote, his sure remedy for Mason's frazzled lower bowel—"You must drink a glass of rum with a whole clove of garlic." Mason did, and the next day found himself cured. If at times the mulatto seemed a little erratic, that might have had something to do with the stress of genius and a childhood spent in Duvalier's Haiti. One night Mason suggested a game of chess and the mulatto refused.

"I don't play chess since I was a boy. The match with you, that was the first time in fifteen years."

"But you're brilliant!"

The mulatto shrugged. "I was third in the national championship the year I was twelve, and when my father found out he threw away my chess set and all my chess books. He said there is no place in the world for a Haitian chess player."

"But if you were good enough—"

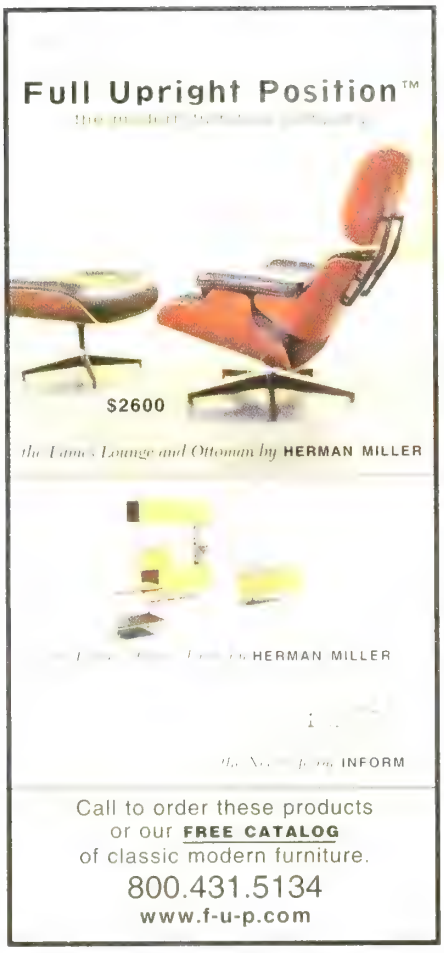
"He said I would never be. And he was probably right, my father was a very smart man."

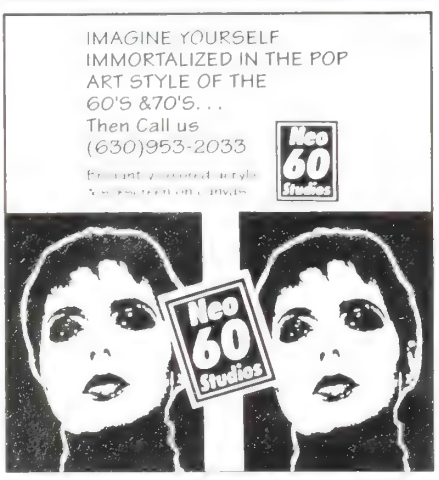
Mason hesitated; the past tense was always loaded in Haiti. "What was he?"

"Doctor *Ophthalmologiste*."

Again Mason hesitated. "Under Duvalier most of the doctors left."

"My father stayed. He was an eminence. The last Haitian to deliver a paper to the International Congress of Ophthalmology." He fell silent for a moment, seemed to gather himself. "If you were noted in your field, that could protect you, but this also meant Duvalier perceived you as a threat. You could be famous but you could never slip, show that you were vulnerable in any way. One slip, and they'd take you." The mulatto paused again. "My father never slipped, but I think it made him a little crazy. He kept a gun in the house—we lived on the Champ de





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[illegible] at night we could hear the screams of people being tortured in the Palace. One night he took this gun, my father, he held the bullets in his [illegible] brother. This one for your Mama. [illegible] alive."

"What [illegible]" Mason's question to the mulatto one night a month later would be false, because he'd lived [illegible] the couch. Sometimes he did; by morning he was always gone. Mason would stretch out on the couch, eat his toast and mango jelly, then drive over to the office and get [illegible] by. Some days he drove around in his white 4 Runner with the powder-blue O.A.S. flag rippling in the breeze: "showing the blue," this was called, letting the de facto know that they were being watched, the mulatto explained. While Mason [illegible] assumed some capacity for shame on their part. Other days he was assigned to the storefront office that took complaints of human-rights abuses. Not much happened on those days; it was common knowledge that the building was watched, [illegible]

[illegible] Titanyen and make a count of the bodies [illegible] were horrible days. Titanyen was a [illegible] together by a furze of rank, spraddling [illegible] crumbling stone portals—the gates to [illegible] and stepped from your car into a pres- [illegible] others, an evil-looking, black-and- [illegible] and his colleagues would tramp through the muck, sweating, swatting at the murderous bugs, hacking away the weeds until they came on a body, whatever mud-caked, hog-tied, maggoty wretch the de facto had seen fit to drag out here. From the shade of the trees bordering the field a pack of feral dogs was always watching them, alert, anticipating a fresh meal. Those dogs, the Haitian driver once confided in a whisper, were de facto.

"The dogs?" Mason asked, wondering if his Creole had failed him again.

Sure, the driver explained. They were *zobop*, men who could change into animals. Those dogs over there were de facto spies.

Mason nodded, squinting at the distant dogs. *M'tande*, he said. I hear you.

Each week they photographed the bodies, drafted their report, and turned it over to their boss, the increasingly demoralized Argentine lawyer. They were all lawyers, all schooled in the authority of words, though as their words turned to dust a pall of impotence and futility settled over the mission. The weakest on the team gave themselves up to pleasure, taking advantage of their $6,000 tax-free a month to buy all the best art, eat at the best restaurants, and screw strings of beautiful impoverished Haitian girls. The best lapsed into a simmering, low-grade depression: you had to watch, that was your job, to *observe* this disaster, a laughable, tragically self-defeating mission.

"What does it mean?" Mason asked the mulatto one night. They were sitting in Mason's kitchen during a blackout, studying Hyppolite's *Ezili Hatien* by candlelight. The picture was taped to the back of a kitchen chair, facing them like a [illegible] party to the conversation.

"It is a dream," said the mulatto, who was slumped in his chair with his legs thrown out. The first beer always went in a couple of gulps, and then he'd [illegible] like a heap of wet towels.

"Well, sure," said Mason, "*Haitian* [illegible] already told me that." And the colors did have the bleak look of a dream, the dull plasma blush of the alternating pinks, the toneless mattes of the blues and grays, a few muddy clots of sluggish [illegible]. In the background a nude woman was sleeping on a wrought-iron bed. Closet in stood an impassive bourgeois couple, the man holding a book for the woman to read. The room was a homely, somewhat stilted jumble of curtains, tables and chairs, framed pictures and potted plants, while in the foreground two [illegible] rats darted past a crouched cat. As in a dream the dissonance seemed pregnant, significant; the sum effect was vaguely menacing.

"I can't make heads or tails of it," said Mason. "And that thing there by the bed," he continued, pointing out what looked like a small window casement between the bed and the rest of the room. "What's that?"

"That's part of the dream," said the mulatto, almost smiling.

"It looks like a window."

"Yes, I think you are right. Hyppolite puts this very strange object in his picture, I think he's trying to tell you something. He's telling you a way of looking at things."

On these nights the gunfire seemed diminished, a faint popping in their ears like a pressure change, though if the rounds were nearby the mulatto's eye would start twitching like a terrified mouse. Here is a man, Mason thought, who's living on air and inspiration, holding himself together by force of will. He was passionate about the art, equally passionate in his loathing for the people who'd ruined Haiti. You don't belong here, Mason wanted to tell him. You deserve a better place. But this was true of almost every Haitian he'd ever met.

"You know, my father thought Duvalier was retarded," the mulatto said one night. They were looking at a deadpan Obin portrait of the iconic first family, circa 1964; Papa Doc's eyes behind his glasses had the severe, transcendent stare of a Byzantine mosaic. "It's true," he continued, "they worked together treating yaws during the 1950s, every week they would ride out to Les Cayes to see patients. Duvalier would sit in the car wearing his suit and his hat and never say a word for six hours. He never drank, never ate, never relieved himself, never said a word to anyone. Finally one day my father asked him, 'Doctor, is something the matter? You are always so quiet—

ave we displeased you?' Are you in
y.' And Duvalier turned to him
ery slowly and said, 'I am thinking
bout the country.' And of course,
ou know, he really was. Politically
he man was a genius."

Mason shook his head. "He was
st ruthless, that's all."

"But that's a form of genius too,
thlessness. Very few of us are capa-
e of anything so pure, but this was
is forte, his true metier, all of the
rms and applications of cruelty
he force of good always refers to
omething beyond ourselves—we
egate ourselves to serve this higher
ning. But evil is pure, evil serves
nly the self of ego, you are limited
nly by your own imagination. And
is thing Duvalier conceived, this
pparatus of evil, it's beautiful in the
ay of an elegant machine. An ele-
nt machine that may never stop."

"I can see you've thought about it."

"Of course. In Haiti we are forced
think about it."

Which was true, Mason reflected
he made his rounds, Haiti shoved
in your face sure enough. During
he day he'd drive through the livid
reets and look for ways to make
he crisis cohere. At night he'd lock
s doors, pull down all the shades,
pread twenty or thirty canvases
round his house, and wander
rough the rooms, looking. After a
hile he'd go to the kitchen and fix
bowl of rice or noodles, then wan-
er around some more, looking as
e ate. It was like sliding a movie
nto the VCR, but this was better,
e decided. This was real. With
me the colors began to bleed into
s head, and he'd find himself
hinking about them during the
y, projecting the iridescent greens
nd blues onto the streets outside
is car, a way of seeing that seemed
charge the place with meaning.
he style that seemed so primitive
nd childish at first came to take on
subversive quality, like a sly com-
entary on how the world had gone
he last 500 years. In the flat, tilted
erspectives, the faces' confronta-
onal starkness, he began to get the
nse of a way of being that had sur-
ived behind the prevailing myths.
he direct vision, the thing itself
ithout the softening filter of tech-
nical tricks—the vision gradually
became so real to him that he felt
himself clenching as he looked at
the paintings, uneasy in his skin,
defensive. An obscene sophistica-
tion began to creep into the art;
they were painting things he only
dimly sensed, but with time he was
starting to see a richness, a luxuri-
ance of meaning there that merged
with the photos, never far from his
mind, in the mission's files of the
Haitian dead.

Life here had the cracked logic of
a dream, its own internal rules. You
looked at a picture and it wasn't like
looking at a picture of a dream, it was
passage into the current of the
dream. And for him the dream had
its own peculiar twist, the dream of
doing something real, something
worthy. A *blan*'s dream, perhaps
all the more fragile for
that.

He packed sixty-three canvases
in a soft duffel bag and nobody laid a
hand on him. He had to face the or-
deal all by himself, with not a soul to
turn to for comfort or advice. There
hadn't even been the consolation of
seeing the mulatto before he left, the
last sack of paintings delivered by a
kid with a scrawled one-word mes-
sage: *Go*. But Mason was white, and
he had a good face, the whole thing
was so absurdly easy that he could
have wept, though what he did do
on checking into his hotel room was
switch on the cable to MTV and
bounce across the bed for a couple of
minutes.

He'd gone from Haiti to the heart
of chic South Beach. His hotel rose
off the sea in slabs of smooth con-
crete like a pastel-colored birthday
cake, but for a day Mason had to
content himself with watching the
water from his balcony. When the
call finally came he gathered up the
duffel bag and walked three blocks to
The Magritte, an even sleeker hotel
where the men were older, the wom-
en younger, the air of corruption pal-
pable. Well, he thought, here's a nice
place to be arrested, but in the room
there was only the Frenchman and a
silent, vaguely Asian type whose eyes
never left Mason's face. There were
no personal items about; they might
have taken the room for an hour.
Mason had to wait and watch while
the Frenchman laid the paintings
onto the bed like cold meat on
industrial cloth. He was brisk, cor-
dial, condescending, a younger man
than Mason expected, with a broad,
compact face only slightly marred by a
prissy mustache and goat.

They wore dark, elegant suits.
Their hair was smooth. They looked
more in the way of people who obsess
over workouts and what they eat.
New Age gangsters. Mason sensed a
sucking emptiness in them, the void
that comes of total self-absorption. It
made him sick to hand the paintings
over to these people.

"And the Bigaud?" the Frenchman
asked in English. "*The Bathers*."

"He couldn't get out."

A quick grimace, then a fond, for-
giving smile, he was gracious in the
way of a pro stuck with amateurs.
He acted like a gentleman, but he
wasn't. It was only since he'd lived
in Haiti that Mason found himself
thinking this way, only since he'd
met the first true gentleman of his
life.

They gave him the money in a
Blue nylon bag, and he made them
wait while he counted it. Later, per-
versely, he would think of this as the
bravest thing he'd ever done, how he
endured their stares and bemused
sarcasm while he counted out the
money. When it was finished and
he'd zipped up the nylon bag, the
Frenchman asked:

"What will you do now?"

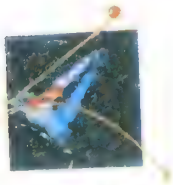
Mason was puzzled, then adamant.
"I'm going back, of course. I have to
give him the money."

The Frenchman's cool ruled him
for the briefest moment. He seemed
surprised, indeed, the silence Mason
wondered, Is my honor so strange?
And then the smile reengaged, with
real warmth, it seemed, but Mason
saw that he was being mocked.

"Yes, absolutely. They're
all waiting for you."

At the house in Pacot he stuffed
the cash up the voodoo drum he'd
bought months earlier at the Iron
Market. Then he settled in and went
about his business, staying up late at
night to listen for the door, going

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to the pail every afternoon to take his daily bath at dusk. He realized he was good at this kind of life, the lie of carrying on a normal routine while he kept himself primed for the tap on the back, the look from the stranger that said Come. Meet me. Late at night he could hear machine guns chewing up the slums, a faint ghost sound, the feel of a kind of haunting. During the day he would look at the mountains overhead like huge green waves towering over the city, and he'd think, Let it come. Let it all crash down.

He missed the paintings with the same kind of visceral ache as he'd missed certain girls who'd meant something to him. He missed the mulatto in a way that went beyond words, the man whose aura of purpose burned hot enough to me even a cautious *blan*. My friend, Mason thought a hundred times a day, the phrase so constant that it might have been a prayer. My very good friend whose name I don't even know. The air felt heavy, thick with delay and anticipation, though the slow sway and bob of palm fronds seemed to counsel patience. Finally one evening he couldn't wait any longer. He carried his chess set past the park into the Salomon quarter, an awful risk that the mulatto would surely scold him for, but he couldn't help himself. He had trouble finding the street and had almost given up when it appeared in the ashy half-light of dusk. He turned and walked along it with a casual air. Just a glance at the house was all he needed: the green walls streaked with soot, the charred stumps of the trees, the blackened, empty windows like hollow eye sockets. Just a glance, and he never broke the swing of his stride, never lost the easy rhythm of his breathing.

The next day he went back with his truck and driver, poking around under the guise of official business. He knocked on doors and explained [illegible] the neighbors shuffled their feet, picked at their hands, glanced up and down the block as they talked. Lots of shooting one night, they said, people shooting from the street. Bombs, and then the fire, [illegible] except

they'd all rolled under their beds the first shot. The next morning they'd edged outside to find the house this way, and no one had gone near it since.

When had it happened? Mason asked, but now the elastic Haitian sense of time came into play. Three days ago, one man said. Another said a month. Back at the office Mason went through the daily logs and found an incident dated ten days earlier, the day he'd left for Miami. The text of the report filled a quarter page. They had the street name wrong but otherwise it fit, the shooting and explosions and ensuing fire, then the de facto's response to the O.A.S. inquiry. Seven charred bodies had been recovered from the house, none identified, all interred by the government. The incident was characterized as gang activity, "probably drug-related." Mason winced at the words. The line had grown to be a bad joke around the mission, the explanation they almost always got whenever a group of *macoutes* turned up dead.

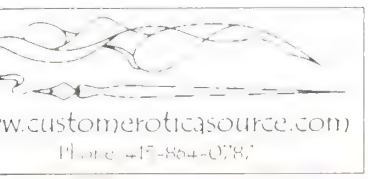
Still, Mason hoped. He made his rounds each day through the stinking streets, past old barricades and armed patrols and starving street kids with their furied stares, and every afternoon he wrote his report and watched storms roll down the mountainsides like the hand of God. Finally he felt it one day as he was driving home, he just knew: his glorious friend was dead. It caught him after weeks of silence, a moment when the cumulative weight of days reached in and pushed all the air from his chest, and when he breathed in again there was just no hope. False, small, shabby, that's how it seemed now, the truth wishing through him like sickness. He'd been a fool to think they'd had any kind of chance. Inside the house he got as far as the den, where he took the voodoo drum from its place on the shelf and sat on the floor. Wearily, slowly, he rocked the drum over and reached inside. The money was there, all that latent power stuffed inside the shaft, something waiting to be born, something sleeping. He cradled the unformed dream in his hands and wondered who to give it to.

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willing to reach an agreement
th the colonists, but the powerful
mmercial interests of the day fo-
nted the war to protect their prof-
. Governments using military
ength to secure markets for big
siness continue to this day. The
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imate guarantee against just such
use of power.

Lazare also fails to mention that,
cording to the National Vital
atistics report issued in June, the
e-adjusted death rate for all
earm injuries declined by more
an 20 percent between 1993 and
97, and continues to fall. Well
er half of the 32,436 firearms fa-
ities in 1997 were suicides, which
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enter for Media and Public Affairs,
edia coverage of murder has near-
quadrupled in the same time
riod.

lt education is in fact the founda-
on of a successful democracy, this
nd poses a far greater threat than
e guns we are told are the problem

uid Crafe
rtland, Oreg.

he Lives of Boys

Coming of age in 1970s New York
ity, I always felt that one of femi-
sm's noble aims—to create a society
which success is measured not by
ll ir signs and muscle size but by a
andard of care and sensitivity—was
t just for women but for me too.
Ann Wypijewski's nuanced explo-
tion of the nooks and crannies of
asculine identity in Laramie,
Wyoming, through the lens of the
atthew Shepard murder ["A Boy's
fe," September] serves as an impor-
nt reminder that maleness is a tough
it that's still left to crack if the best
feminism's goals are ever to be real-
ed. If boys continue to come of age
a world where there is no place for
eir sadness and longing, they will
rely continue to fortify the castles of
their bleak and repressed world as
they foray into adulthood.

It is important to remember, how-
ever, that gay America today is not
some army seeking to overthrow the
regime of masculinity. The gay cul-
ture in New York and other cities
formed by exiles from a thousand
Laramies displays a decidedly unironic
tendency to internalize the very
macho ethic Wypijewski decries. I'd
pit the buffed gay gym addicts of
Chelsea against Laramie's stoic het-
erosexual cowboys any day in the
war of repressive male icons. Just as
feminists have often settled for re-
producing traditionally male power
plays, so too has the urban, visible
gay community abandoned the more
difficult and noble aspects of earlier
agendas. In the end, it's easier to
make a million dollars or beef up our
muscles than it is to make the world
safe for boys' tears.

Peter Cenedella
New York City

Your Brain on Propaganda

Before we snicker and guffaw at
the Chinese government's propagan-
da on the Falun Gong movement
["The Falun Gong Show," Readings,
October], it would not hurt to take a
quick look at our own government's
propaganda about the effects of ille-
gal drugs. There is more than a pass-
ing similarity: fantastic tales of
death, destruction, and chromoso-
mal damage, people going blind from
staring into the sun while under the
influence of LSD, the unrelenting
criminality of drug users, etc. We are
urged to label Chinese propaganda
absurd, but our own propaganda is
meant to be taken at face value. Can
anyone rightly argue that the Chi-
nese government is steeped in lies
while our own is the unparalleled
repository of purity and truth?

Harry D. Fisher
Los Angeles

Kingdom of Berries

Reading Henry David Thoreau's
essay on berry picking in New Eng-
land in the mid-1800s ["Black Huck-
leberries," Readings, October], I real-
ized that he could have been writing

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[illegible]

about Newfoundland in 1999. W[illegible] tree, watch the growth of the w[illegible] berries and prize the first mouthf[illegible] as they ripen one after the oth[illegible] The strawberries begin around t[illegible] end of June, followed by skunk c[illegible] rants, raspberries, bakeapples (clou[illegible] berries), blueberries, squashberri[illegible] partridgeberries (foxberries or l[illegible] gonberries), blackberries, and finall[illegible] marsh berries and cranberries in O[illegible] tober. All grow wild within a te[illegible] minute drive from the center of [illegible] John's, the province's capital, [illegible] publicly accessible crown land. Ne[illegible] foundland is commonly portrayed s[illegible] one of Canada's "have not" pro[illegible] inces, but its natural bounty giv[illegible] equal access to all its citizens. At[illegible] one can pick a barrel of berries her[illegible]

Mary Bridson
Portugal Cove, Newfoundland

Clarification

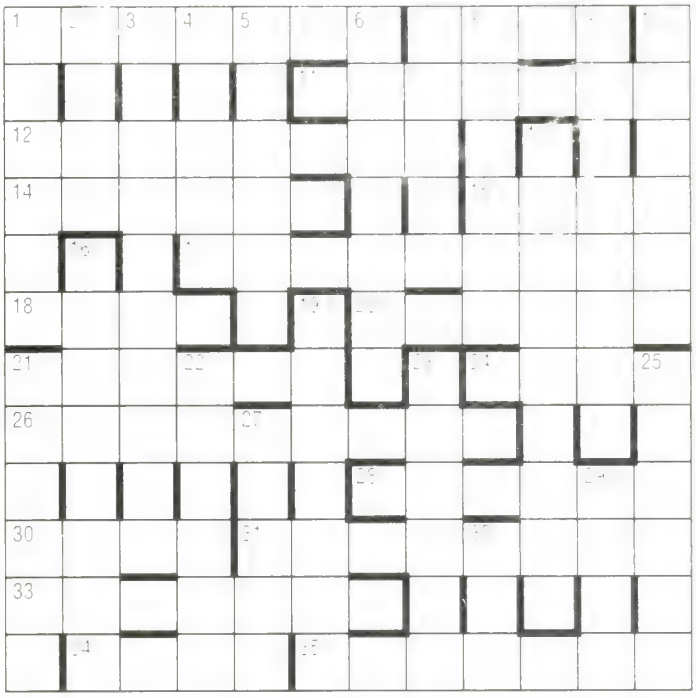
The December 1999 annotati[illegible] "This Is Your Bill of Rights, [illegible] Drugs" by Graham Boyd and Ja[illegible] Hitt, neglected to distinguish b[illegible] tween the text being annotated [illegible] of the extant facsimiles of the do[illegible] ment containing twelve articles su[illegible] mitted by Congress for ratification [illegible] the states in 1789 and the first t[illegible] amendments of the Constitutio[illegible] which are generally known as the B[illegible] of Rights. In 1787, when the fram[illegible] submitted the Constitution to t[illegible] states, several ratifying conventio[illegible] demanded that the rights of indivi[illegible] als be more explicitly enumerated a[illegible] protected. In 1789, the First Congr[illegible] of the United States convened to a[illegible] dress these demands. The resulti[illegible] document—the one reproduced [illegible] December's annotation—has come [illegible] be iconically recognized, by the N[illegible] tional Archives and others, as the B[illegible] of Rights. However, its first two ar[illegible] cles, pertaining to the size of Co[illegible] gress and the compensation of [illegible] members, were rejected by state le[illegible] latures and thus consigned to histo[illegible] cal obscurity. Article the Thi[illegible] through Article the Twelfth we[illegible] successfully ratified and, on Septe[illegible] ber 25, 1791, adopted as the first t[illegible] amendments to the Constitutio[illegible] These are the amendments that co[illegible] stitute the Bill of Rights.

Y2K

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

The first Y2K-inspired crossword puzzle to avoid all references to the year 2000 has been created by this puzzle. The computer program inventing the diagram could not cope with a central millennial classic and, to make matters worse, it then deleted all word lengths, making the puzzle solvable only by geeks and programmers and *Harper's* readers.

Clue/answers are in order in proper numerical sequence. Words must not be repeated in the solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 77.



Across

1. Slip to conclude "Hi Honey I'm Home" (5)
7. Monetary amount with German crown (4)
11. "HIRE" (5)
12. Beer in [illegible] (5)
14. [illegible] (5)
15. Break for lunch, perhaps, returning about start of meeting (4)
17. Your speller initially [illegible] mentions [illegible] (4)
18. Like the road [illegible] goodness! (5)
20. [illegible] (5)
21. [illegible] farm girl? (5)
24. [illegible] wholeheartedly (5)
26. Intrude upon evolving fledgling (4)
28. [illegible] (5)
29. [illegible] (5)
31. Islets serviced by the most craft (4)
33. [illegible] with appeal (5)
34. [illegible] (5)
35. [illegible] (5)

Down

2. [illegible] (5)
3. [illegible] (5)
4. [illegible] (5)
5. [illegible] (5)
6. [illegible] (5)
7. [illegible] (5)
8. [illegible] (5)
9. [illegible] (5)
10. [illegible] (5)
13. [illegible] (5)
16. [illegible] (5)
19. [illegible] (5)
22. [illegible] (5)
23. [illegible] (5)
25. [illegible] (5)
27. [illegible] (5)
30. [illegible] (5)
32. Spade turns up patents (4)

Contest Rules: [illegible]

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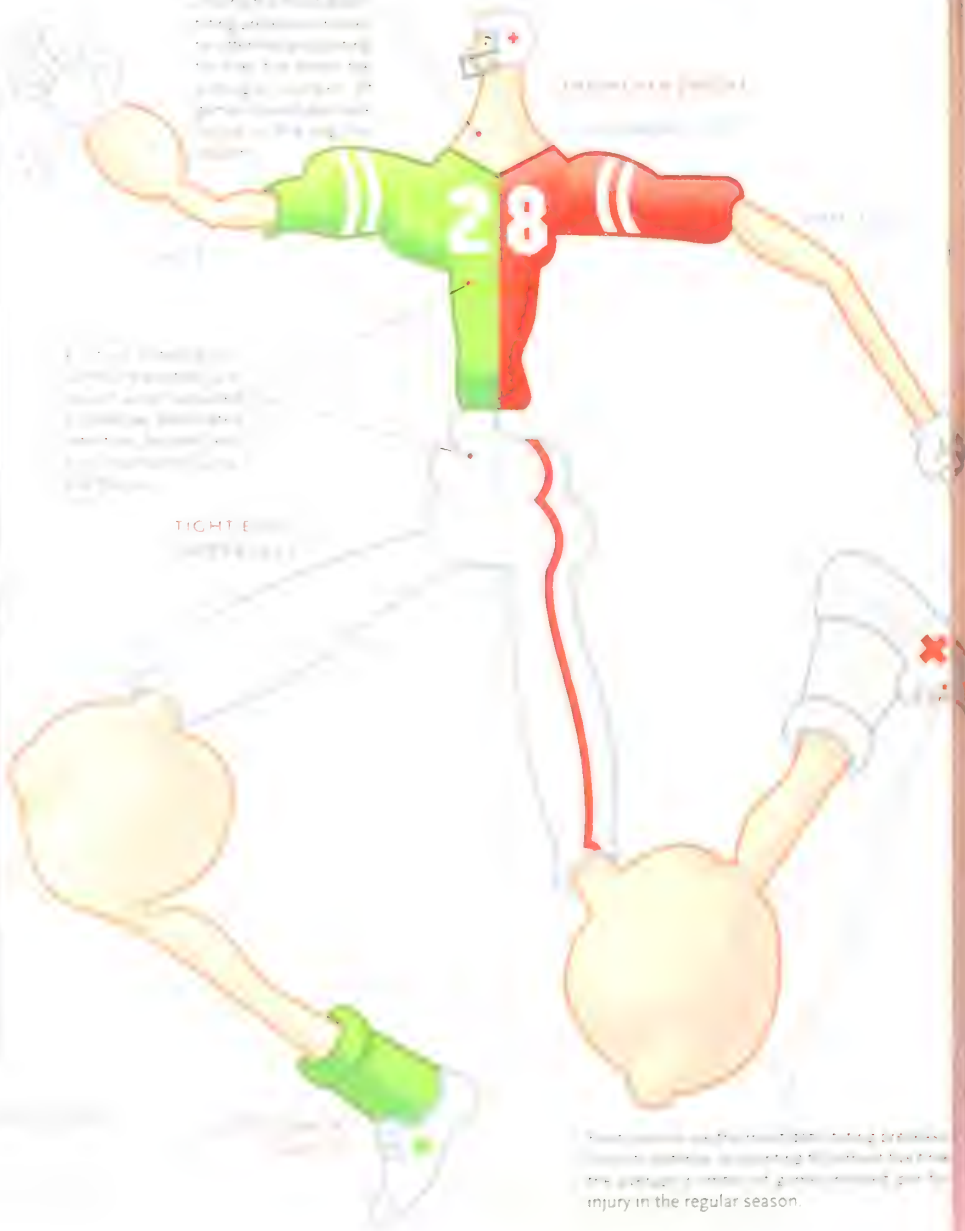
SIZE OF BODY PARTS REFLECTS THE NUMBER OF MISSED GAMES CAUSED BY INJURIES IN THE 1998-99 SEASON.

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HARPER'S



NOTES ON A NATIVE SON

I. The George W. Bush Success Story—A Heartwarming Tale about Baseball, $1.7 Billion, and a Lot of Swell Friends
By Joe Conason

II. The Prospect of a Bush Restoration
By Kevin Phillips

CONNUBIAL ABYSS

The Mysterious Narrative of Marriage
By Kathryn Harrison

THE PAPERHANGER

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Also: William S. Burroughs and Richard M. Nixon

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SATURNS. MORE THAN 95% OF THE PARTS
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HARPER'S

LETTERS

Other People's Wars

Edward Luttwak suggests that it is wrong to try to protect weaker nations from stronger ones because doing so simply prolongs the struggle and delays peace ["Give War a Chance," Readings, November]. Stand aside and let the weak be defeated, decisively, and everyone will be better off.

By this logic, we should let rapists sate themselves on victims because intervention only prolongs agony and delays satiation. If a police presence simply increases crime and violence, let relatives avenge crimes, let feuds and vendettas play themselves out, let warlords settle matters on the basis of "might makes right."

I say, instead, let there not be complacent, self-righteous abstentionism in which we allow chaos to prevail beyond the confines of our own (no doubt orderly) neighborhoods.

[illegible]
Southampton, U.K.

[illegible] Edward Luttwak's essay, thinking it to be a sort of Swiftian "Modest Proposal." But I fear that his arguments are too cranky to be intended ironically.

Luttwak claims that peace occurs when "all belligerents become exhausted or when one wins decisively." Does he mean, for instance, that the Boers' decisive victory over black South Africans brought peace? Contemporary war is not particularly tiring for the belligerents; it is civilians who suffer exhaustion and far worse. Ten percent of World War I casualties were civilian, but the level of civilian casualties in today's wars approaches 80 percent. Since 1990 alone, 2 million children have died in war.

History tells us that missionaries who aided the colonized also served the interests of the colonizers, and contemporary nongovernmental organizations must find themselves in a similar quandary. But many of us still feel it is better to feed people than to starve them, and to bind wounds rather than to make them.

Brigid Grant
Fredericton, New Brunswick

[illegible] Harper's *Broadway, New York, NY.*

The late unpleasantness in the Balkans and the long string of Arab-Israeli conflicts—to use Edward Luttwak's own examples of paradigmatic conflicts rudely interrupted by the frivolous motives of the West—were all inspired by territorial and genocidal inclinations. This base-

ess, displayed by all sides in these
nflicts, would not end until one
e was completely annihilated.
As a military officer I find
ttwak's essay to be cerebral pyro
ia, and as a social realist I find it
pellent and narrow in scope. I can
ly hope that his naive bravado is
nough to get him to a recruiting
ation at the outset of the next
eat war. He seems to believe that
has the intestinal fortitude for
ne horrors of modern warfare,
hich presumably he has so far
ewed from the safety of his La-
prite recliner.

Hugh Barker
oronto, Ontario

ugar and Vice

I must take issue with Paul
oberts's assertion that the sugar in-
ustry is stealthily adding its nectar
o our common foods ["The Sweet
lereafter," November]. He cautions
s that 94 percent of the calories in a
ottle of ketchup come from sugar,
s well as one fifth of a can of corn's,
wo fifths of a jar of Prego's, and so
n. What he doesn't mention is that
ne majority of the sugar in these
oods is naturally occurring and not
dded during processing. Organic
omato puree, with nothing added,
erives 60 percent of its calories
om the tomato's own natural sug-
rs. And as for corn, well, they don't
all it "sweet corn" for nothing.
ven a food like 2 percent milk gets
ver one third of its calories from
ugar (lactose) without any help
om the sugar industry.

Make no mistake: sugar is being
dded to thousands of food products.
oberts just happened to pick some
oor examples.

atrick Maxwell
Newport, N.Y.

Paul Roberts's report on the sugar
ndustry's government-subsidized
avaging of the Everglades raises an
nteresting dilemma. We seem able
o negotiate trade agreements, even
preferred status" trade agreements,
ith communist regimes around the
orld, some of which have killed
American troops in combat, yet we

American Express and Harper's Magazine
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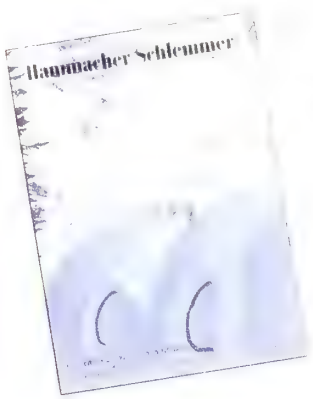
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always seem to take the moral high ground when it comes to Cuba, with a blame-the-victim attitude that would be laughable if it were not for the very real human costs it imposes on the Cuban people. Our government is normally quick to recognize that free markets are the surest path to capitalism. But not, strangely, in the case of Cuba.

Could the dark prospect of a plentiful supply of cheap Cuban sugar jeopardizing the profits of sugar barons J. Nelson Fairbanks (of U.S. Sugar Corporation) and Alfy and Pepe Fanjul (of Florida Crystals), possibly have anything to do with it?

Much has been made of Chinese contributions to American political campaigns, alleged attempts to influence America's foreign policy toward China. So why the silence about the Fanjuls' annual campaign contributions, to both parties, in amounts that dwarf those credited to Beijing?

Jack Morton
Long Beach, Calif.

It would take pages to point out all the errors contained in Paul Roberts's clever weave of history and fiction. In the interest of space, here are just a few.

1. His account of President Clinton and Alfonso Fanjul's February 19, 1996, conversation is in error. The conversation did take place, but Roberts's description of it is absolute fiction.

2. Contrary to Roberts's claim, the Everglades restoration plan drawn up by Florida Crystals' scientists bears little resemblance to the plan developed by the Clinton Administration and the Everglades Forever Act.

3. The assertion that federal sugar policy escaped a 1996 reform movement with "only minor technical corrections" is laughable. Sugar mills continue to receive the widest the lowest guaranteed prices in fourteen years.

4. Lucille, the character in Carl Hiaasen's novel [illegible] which the movie *Striptease* was based, have nothing to [illegible] Fanjul [illegible] suggest [illegible] is [illegible] a [illegible]

Roberts apparently knew what he was going to write before visiting Florida. [illegible] came to the industry spent a lot of time answering his tough questions. All anyone can expect in return is that facts called facts and opinions are attributed.

Jorge Dominicis
Florida Crystals Corporation
Palm Beach, Fla.

Paul Roberts responds

Jorge Dominicis's complaints, like much of the rest of the sugar industry's rhetoric, are based on wishful thinking.

First, I stand behind my account of Alfonso Fanjul's February 1996 call to President Clinton. As I stated, "just hours after Al Gore proposed his own sugar tax and vowed to make the Everglades the centerpiece of the administration's environmental policy, Alfy Fanjul called Clinton . . . to remind him of the vast sums the Fanjuls had pumped into Clinton's presidential campaigns," and the tax proposal vanished. This account comes from a source intimately familiar with that conversation.

Second, the claim of "little resemblance" between restoration plans proposed by both Florida Crystals and the Clinton Administration is ludicrous to anyone familiar with the record. Although the plans differed in details, on substantive issues—such as who would pay for Everglades cleanup, or how clean the water needed to be—they were identical. (Critics were especially irritated by the immunity the White House granted to Florida Crystals against any future costs, such as additional cleanup fees or tougher water regulations, even if such costs were warranted by research.)

Dominicis's third claim—that the federal sugar program truly was reformed in 1996—is even more absurd. True enough, farmers did lose the luxury of unconditionally guaranteed federal loans; under a change in the law, if sugar imports ever fall below 1.5 million tons a year, the loans are no longer guaranteed. In theory, that's a huge change—except that it will never come into effect. According to the USDA's own projections, sugar imports won't drop to anywhere near the 1.5 million-ton

utoff at any time in the next ten ears. Essentially, all the so called eform has done is lock in the indus- ry's price guaranty for another ecade.

As to the claim that Carl Hi- asen's novel *Strip Tease*—a satirical ook at two cutthroat Cuban-Ameri- an sugar barons, their toadying con- gressman, and the dancer that brings hem all down—had nothing to do vith the Fanjuls, I'll leave that to eaders of the book.

Special Education

Despite Mike Bollhorst's "fervent nope" that I leave teaching, ex- pressed in his reponse [Letters, De- cember] to my essay in which I relat- ed how I lowered my grading tandards during my career as a pub- ic school teacher ["Why Johnny Can't Fail," Readings, September], I vill not be leaving teaching anytime oon.

When I returned to teaching four- een years ago, I made the conscious lecision to make what compromises had to in order to survive in the ystem. This did not make me a per- fect teacher, but it made me a better eacher than I would have been had been working at odds with superi- ors, students, and parents. One eacher acting alone cannot success- ully promote high standards as long as the consumers of education are nore concerned with grades and diplomas than with knowledge.

I have since found peace in the special education classroom. The same system that did not allow me to demand that high school students read and understand Shakespeare re- oices when formerly illiterate fourth graders begin to read storybooks.

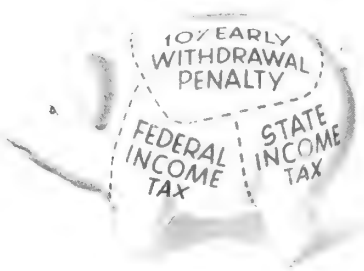
Heaven help our students if all the cynics in education abandon teach- ng in the name of integrity, and eave public education in the hands of the "true believers."

Jerry Jesness
Harlingen, Tex.

In his response to Jerry Jesness's essay, "Why Johnny Can't Fail,"

Continued on page 95

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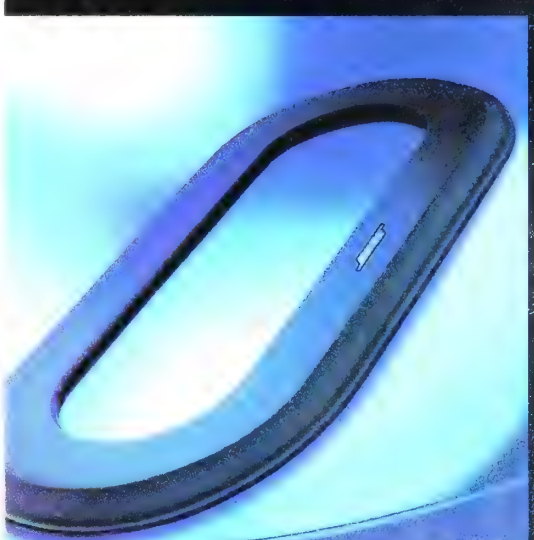
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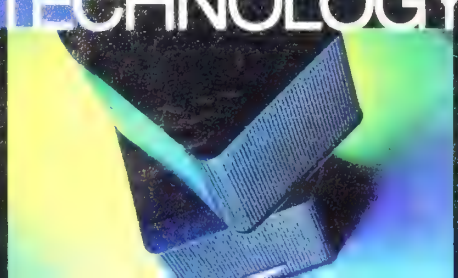
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NOTEBOOK

Merit badges

By Lewis H. Lapham

The moral instinct is not help to many; it permeates the country. There is a tooth in the nature of a carpet-tack and cat.

Henry Adams

By the time that Senator John McCain brought his presidential campaign to the 92nd Street Y in Manhattan on the evening of December 5, the New Hampshire opinion polls were showing him with a surprisingly even chance against George W. Bush in the February primary elections, his inspirational memoir, *Faith of My Fathers*, had run through nine printings and 390,000 copies in thirteen best-selling weeks, and the three officers on the quarterdeck of the national news media (at ABC, NBC, and *Time*, as well as at *The Late Show* and the *Wall Street Journal*) had awarded him their finest medal for gallantry in action. The medals were posthumous. It was assumed that my lady expected the senator to win the nomination (the lady's have enough money, his name on the ballot appears in the ballot in New York, the Republican governors in the state have promised support), but everybody was glad to see that the country could still entertain the notion of a [illegible] who had endured five years of deprivation and torture in a North Vietnamese prison, a champion [illegible] the corrupt congressional [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] of the [illegible] of the [illegible]

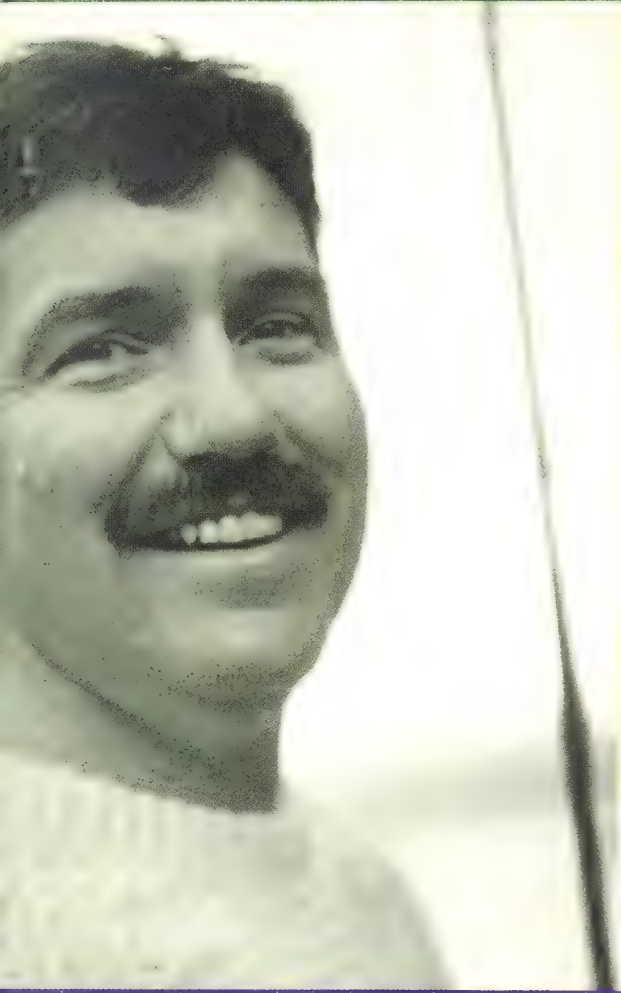
The inflated rhetoric also showed up in the backstage gossip circulated by journalists who had accompanied the senator on his travels to New Hampshire. For two months I'd been listening to their starstruck stories about the senator's sardonic wit, his unassuming manner, and forthright answers to questions that other candidates invariably hedged. A *Washington Post* correspondent recalled an afternoon with the senator on his campaign bus (a.k.a. the "Straight Talk Express"), from which he'd come away ashamed of his own cowardly cynicism.

The Kaufmann Concert Hall at the Y seats 900 people, and it was crowded to capacity (the audience middle-aged and well to do, friends of the earth and PBS) when McCain walked out onto the stage with Jeff Greenfield, the chief political correspondent for CNN. The two men sat in armchairs placed at a right angle to each other, Greenfield asking a series of friendly questions and the senator from Arizona shaping his answers to explain, or at least touch upon, a number of the political ideals that [illegible] as "proud conservative." After hearing him talk for no more than ten minutes, I could understand why he had endeared himself to the news media. Affable and intelligent, willing to make jokes at his own expense ("Talk to anybody about anything for twenty minutes, and you're bound to find out I'm not that stupid"), the senator presented himself as a citizen with [illegible] to lose. If he won the election, he won the election; if he lost, he lost. In either event he walked away an honest man. In the meantime he was "having a lot of fun," even [illegible] the applause and notes by

about saying that a good many of his colleagues in the Senate were selling the country down the river for a mess of very expensive pottage. Unless the Congress weaned itself from the breast of soft money ($525 million of it coming on stream between now and next November) any well-intentioned legislation that anybody cared to name was certain to be strangled at birth.

The senator turned an attractive phrase, and as I listened to his list of answers I understood that what he wanted everybody to know was that he was a nice guy, that what was important was his resemblance to Jimmy Stewart in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. The same thought had occurred to me earlier in the week when I'd watched all six of the Republican candidates stage their awkward debate in a New Hampshire television studio. Above all they wished to be seen as nice guys, wholesome and clean-limbed and not unlike the contestants in a Miss America pageant getting through the difficult segment requiring them to demonstrate their appreciation of American history. On a few issues the candidates pointedly disagreed (Governor Bush adamantly in favor of trade with China, Gary Bauer strongly opposed), but for the most part, and with only slight shifts of inflection, all present endorsed the same schedule of uplifting purpose—revise the tax laws (cruel laws, abominably unfair to rich people), discourage the practice of abortion, conduct a more vigilant foreign policy (keeping a sharp lookout for rogue





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the schools (with some sort of privatization scheme), give the government back to the people.

Instead of these memorizations of significant fact, the contestants seemed to entertain negative thoughts. Negative thoughts didn't belong in the home of decent American citizens who deserved the best president that money could buy, and the candidates were careful not to malign one another or give way to cold-blooded, mean words that might be noted by the contestants of the Standard & Poor's Index. George Bush interrupted Hillary's remarks about cleanup and fiscal rectitude to say, apropos of nothing at all, that John McCain was "a brave man and a good friend." McCain returned the compliment by noting that the governor resembled the first four American presidents or any three architects of the Constitution.

The importance of being nice also furnished the subtext for the few television commercials that I'd seen, the candidates appearing in the company of Lincoln (against the background of the Lincoln Memorial, all in cool sunlight, standing somewhere in the vicinity of Ronald Reagan. Made from the same inventory of personal locutions and testimonials as the presentations in the New Hampshire debates, the commercials allowed the contestants to show off their good talent—Forbes as what-could-be-better-than-me, Hillary intelligent in her understated, elegant way, McCain an enemy of spendthrifts. The sequences tended to run together, but I remember Hillary Rodham Clinton standing beside a stripped-pine table and between two tiny American flags, saying to the camera, "I think it's really important for moms [illegible] to the White House and say, 'That person has brought honor and dignity to the office.' Wonderful, but during the [illegible] and by the time I had the fact-checkers [illegible] ABC and Fox News, the contestants were [illegible] to the [illegible] of the office of the presidency. "What was it that they expected to do in the White House other than stand tall in a well-lighted window on the off chance that any moms and dads who happened to be passing by could point and say, "Now there's a person who brings honor and dignity to the office"?

The question again came to mind when the audience at the Y burst suddenly into applause because of something that McCain had said about President Clinton's slovenly moral character, a "bellhop" ushering high-priced donors into the Lincoln Bedroom. The senator clearly didn't approve of bribery or brothels, and I remembered that on reading his book I'd been impressed not only by the tales of courage and endurance (those concerning his father's and grandfather's exploits in World War II as well as his own imprisonment in Hanoi) but also by his insistence on the virtues expected of an officer and a gentleman. "An officer must not lie, steal or cheat—ever. He keeps his word, whatever the cost."

A noble ethic and an admirable sentiment, but not one that would prove much use to a president of the United States or to any other politician forced to wield the instruments of power. Of what does politics consist except the making of imperfect decisions, many of them unjust and quite a few of them deadly? Montaigne put the proposition in a single sentence: "the public good requires us to betray, and to lie, and to massacre—let us resign this commission to those who are more pliable, and more obedient." He could have had in mind the policy of Catherine de Medicis and the reasons of state that required the massacre of the French Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572. He could as easily have been referring to President Lyndon Johnson, who served what he construed to be the public good by carrying forward the war in Vietnam, or President Abraham Lincoln, who determined the public good with the preservation of the Union. Both presidents told lies when lies were necessary to the work at hand, and they ordered the assault regardless. Later proofs of their own crimes against truth and conscience, their fine words turned to mockeries.

George Washington understood the terms of the contract as soon as he was elected president. Unlike McCain or any of the other would-be statesmen in the New Hampshire television studios, Washington was familiar with the weight of supreme command, and on April 1, 1789, thirty days before his first inaugural, he wrote to Henry Knox, the American secretary of war, expressing his reluctance to take up the burden of his new office: "In confidence I can assure *you*—with the *world* it would obtain *little credit*—that my movements to the chair of Government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution . . ."

McCain, by way of contrast, seemed to think that politics was, as he said, "a lot of fun," a matter of setting the high moral tone worthy of "a proud conservative," teaching lessons in right conduct and exemplary deportment. In *Faith of My Fathers* he speaks of the war in Vietnam as a noble cause, as if it were a failed neighborhood improvement project or a losing football season; nobody was at fault, time heals all wounds, and "tragedy" is a word that doesn't appear in the American dictionary. His book reminded me of the Patrick O'Brian novels in which the peerless Captain Jack Aubrey directs the eighteenth-century frigate HMS *Surprise* to inevitable victory over the wicked special interest of Napoleon's Mediterranean and West Indian fleets. As romantic as McCain, Aubrey never feels himself at ease among the sly intrigues damnably afoot in Parliament and the Admiralty, and when confronted with the pride and vanity of ordinary politicians, he takes ship at Portsmouth and escapes, on an evening breeze or morning tide, the civilian sorrows of the uncertain shore.

Coming to the end of his remarks at the 92nd Street Y, McCain revisited the corruption in Washington—the Congress enslaved by its addiction to soft campaign money, K Street infested with parasitical lobbyists. The theme was a popular one, and the audience answered the call to higher moral ground with a salvo of loud applause, which

gemed to me poorly judged. Like
he woman in the fur coat immedi-
tely to my left, the two well-dressed
entlemen immediately to my right
ooked to be the sort of people who
wed at least a part of their good
ortune to one or another of the spe-
ial interests in Washington, so did
nost everybody else in the auditori-
m. Maybe they didn't understand
he mechanics of the deals working
o their particular advantage (which
f the 44,000 pages in the tax code
mproved the income from which of
heir mutual funds), but surely they
new that if the Congress had done
othing else over the course of the
ast eight years, it had proved itself a
reat and good friend to the value of
Manhattan real estate. Had not the
Congress passed legislation favor-
ble to the banks and the insurance
ompanies, to the telecommunica-
ions and pharmaceutical industries?
Where was the corporate merger or
ax exemption of which the Con-
ress didn't heartily approve? Was it
ot true that the foolishness about
using the minimum wage had been
ummarily dismissed, the dry rot
craped off the welfare rolls, the
riends of free trade and free markets
handsomely rewarded
at every turn?

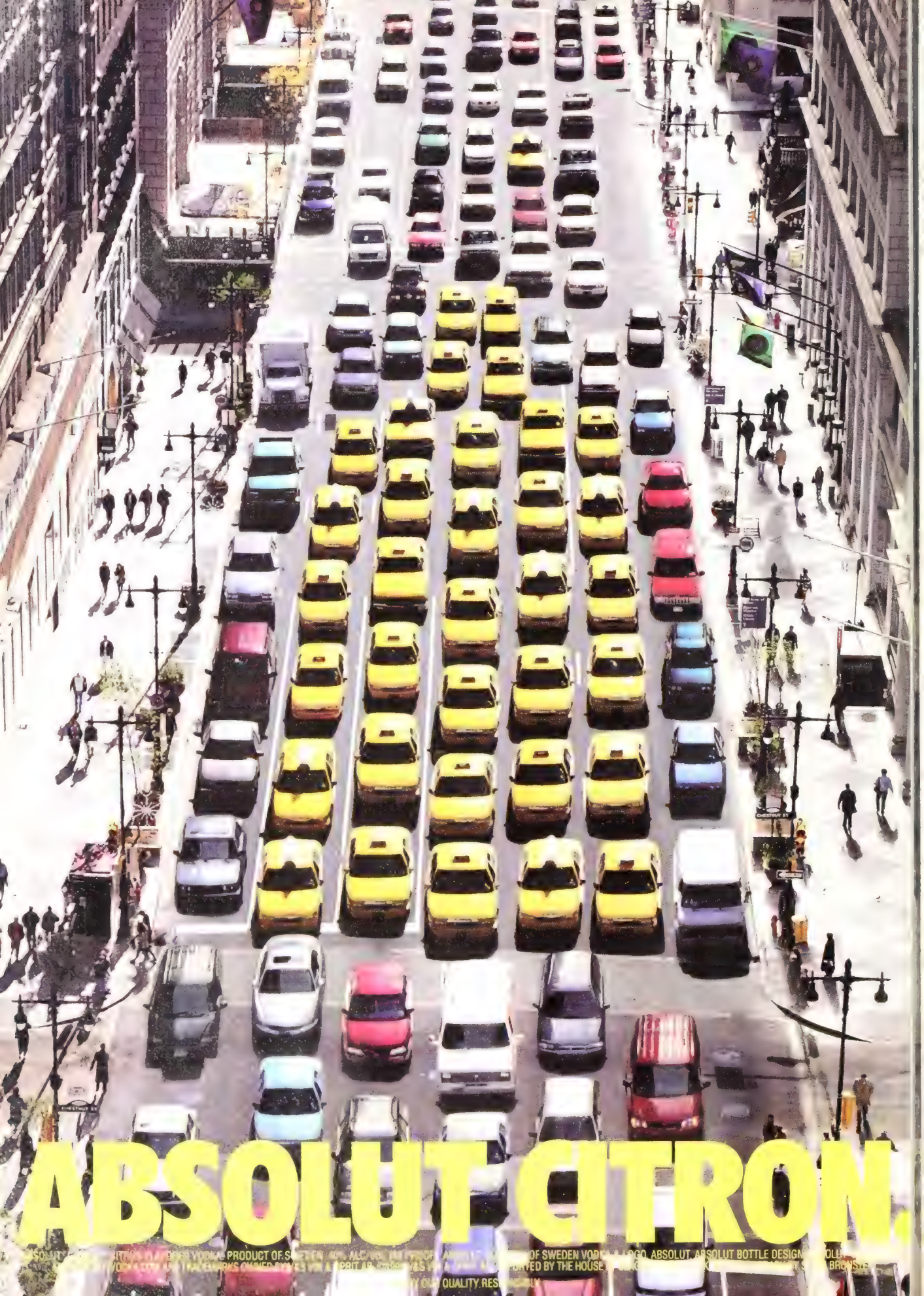
Who, then, was fooling whom? McCain had as little chance of win-
ning the Republican presidential
nomination as Alan Keyes or Gary
Bauer, but for the time being and
maybe through the end of March,
he was good copy, an allegorical fig-
ure representing Civic Virtue that
could be set up in the front page
culpture garden in the place briefly
occupied by Norman Schwarzkopf,
Newt Gingrich, and Colin Powell.
The senator, for his part, undoubt-
dly knew that his fellow Republi-
ans in Washington would as soon
orswear their faith in God (also in
mother and the flag) as give up their
patriot's share of the $525 million
contribution already in the mail.
Taking no chances with missed or
ate delivery, the political action
committees had begun to shelter
their transactions under the jurisdic-
ion of the states, which, as the sen-
ator presumably also knew, allowed
the money to double or triple past
efforts at reform. Nor could I imag-
ine the audience in the Eighteenth
Concert Hall rising to the cause of
social change. The country was at
peace, the proofs of its prosperity
available twenty-four hours a day,
on line and in the shopping malls,
and who would want to quarrel with
a world in which every tomorrow's
Internet IPO promises a $2 billion
windfall?

The historical precedents can be most easily found in the annals of the Gilded Age. The country's politicians in the last quarter of the nineteenth century took their instructions from "the monied interest" embodied in the class of industrial entrepreneurs, among them J. P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller, who ran the railroads and owned the banks. Richard Hofstadter described them in *The American Political Tradition* as "men of heroic audacity and magnificent exploitative talents," directing the proliferation of the country's wealth and managing its corruption. The Congress served them as an auction room in which to buy the laws convenient to their profits.

The sources of the country's wealth have shifted their ground over the last 100 years, but the corporate entities that manage the newer systems of communications, among them Microsoft, Time Warner, and AT&T, have lost nothing of the old exploitive talents, and our own politics rest as safely in the hands of "the monied interest" as when Presidents Chester Arthur, Grover Cleveland, and William McKinley—all of them as accommodating as Reagan, Bush, and Clinton—held fast to their belief that Wall Street could do no wrong.

Remarking on McKinley's election in 1896, Henry Adams described the new president as "a creature of the trusts . . . appealing to the bosses because he's a cheap article, like galvanized tin sheds." Our own Gilded Age flatters itself with the thought that it can afford to purchase goods of better quality. The adoration of Senator McCain suggests that what we wanted is a figure of corruption only slightly less fraudulent in character, a politician closely resembling a scoutmaster, who will agree with dignity and honor, the awarding of the prize to Enron. ■




ABSOLUT CITRON.

HARPER'S INDEX

Number of the 65 international trade disputes settled through the WTO that led to a change in a national policy or law: 34

Number of the 15 disputes involving environmental or public health issues that led to a change in a national policy or law: 1

Days after China announced it would begin acquiring offensive weapons that it was necessary to join the WTO: 7

Maximum range at which China North Industries' new "portable laser disturber" can "injure or disable the vision of humans": 6

Estimated tons of high-performance explosives that the Irish Republican Army must turn in by May: 2.7

Percentage of Chechnya's air force destroyed last September when Russia bombed its main airfield: 80

Days after Ukraine reopened a nuclear reactor at Chernobyl last November that a water leak forced it to shut down: 6

Megawatts by which the world's nuclear power capacity changed during 1998: +2,258

Megawatts by which the world's wind-power capacity changed that year: +2,358

Percentage increase since 1994 in annual federal spending on highways and mass transit, respectively: 52, 33

Ratio of the number of Americans killed in traffic accidents in 1998 to the number killed by medical errors: 1:1

Number of Africans used to test a U.S. polio vaccine made with primate kidney cells in the 1950s: 1,200,000

Number of the 46 Africans found to be HIV-positive before 1981 who lived within 90 miles of the vaccine trials: 45

Projected age to which the AIDS epidemic will lower the life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa by next year: 45

Factor by which the pregnancy-related death rate among African-American women exceeds that of white women: 4

Chance that an African American believes that blacks will never obtain equality in the U.S.: 1 in 2

Hours it took a Tennessee jury last December to decide that the assassination of Martin Luther King was a conspiracy: 2

Years after 1993's Baby Jessica custody ruling that both her birth parents and her adoptive parents filed for divorce: 6

Ratio of the divorce rate in New York State in 1998 to the rate in Arkansas: 2:3

Percentage of New Yorkers who say they have already decided which Senate candidate to vote for in November: 92

Percentage change in the number of marijuana arrests since Bill Clinton became president: +56

Percentage change in Colombia's estimated cocaine production since 1990: +154 (See page 120)

Number of kidnappings reported in Colombia in the first nine months of last year: 2,288 (See page 60)

Hours during which Rio de Janeiro drivers may legally run red lights in order to avoid being mugged: between 11 PM and 5 AM

Maximum number of years to which a Burmese citizen may be sentenced for owning an unregistered computer: 15

Percentage change in the stock price of Microsoft rival Red Hat in the five weeks after the antitrust ruling: +218

Ratio of eToys' 1999 net sales through last September to what it spent on marketing and advertising: 2:3

Ratio of the price of a 30-second Super Bowl ad to what Pizza Hut paid last fall for an Italian Renaissance-space rocket: 2:1

Seconds by which a "slingshot" maneuver performed by a NASA probe last August slowed Earth's rotation: 1.6

Number of feet by which Arctic sea ice has thinned since 1970: 4

Number of colonies of Antarctic Adelie penguins that have disappeared since 1988: 11

Number of U.S. children treated for sledding injuries in 1998: 46,067

Rank of self-inflicted wounds among the top injuries for which teen-age girls were hospitalized in New York State in 1998: 1

Rank of assault among the top causes of injuries for which teenage boys were hospitalized that year: 1

Estimated profit earned by New York State last year on collect calls made by prisoners: $21,000,000

Chance that a drug user holds a full-time job, according to federal studies reviewed for a report: 7 in 10

Months after George W. Bush became a candidate last year that the study was released: 9

Number of the two memoirs published by GOP presidential candidates last year that use the phrase "toga party": 2

Number of textbook reproductions of *George Washington Crossing the Delaware* to include Betsy Ross's flag sold last year: 2,322

Number of parental complaints that prompted the school to decide that Washington's watch fob resembled genitalia: 0

Figures cited have been calculated for inflation, in the case of [illegible] using the Consumer Price Index. Please send suggestions to Harper's Index, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

Vice President Gore believes the environmental movement should "use every policy and program, every law and institution, every treaty and alliance, every tactic and strategy, every plan and course of action" to accomplish a "wrenching transformation of society."

THE CO_2 ISSUE

Hiding in Plain Sight. An October 1999 petition by the International Center for Technology Assessment in behalf of environmental groups asks the Environmental Protection Agency to use the Clean Air Act to regulate carbon dioxide as a "pollutant." Only problem: CO_2 is no pollutant; it's a building block of nature essential to the plant life anchoring earth's food chain.

Pointing to the Obvious. A petition by the Working Group to Oppose Expanded EPA Authority (a project of the Washington Legal Foundation, a national non-profit public interest law and policy center) demonstrates that EPA has such authority because Congress did not intend the Clean Air Act to be used for that purpose.

Human Health and Welfare. Humans creating carb dioxide do not put their health and welfare at ri But using the Rio Treaty, the environmen community wants to curtail the use of the fo fuels that energize the world's economy to "prev dangerous human interference with climate," wh the most a UN science review claims is that huma have a "discernible impact on climate." The tactic is to a treaty rooted in uncertain science to transform the v humans live, justifying the transformation by creating specter of catastrophic global warming.

Get the Facts. Greening Earth Society has reports a information online to support our positive vision. Y can call us toll-free and we'll send you a free booklet, *CO2 Issue*, and information on what you can do to he balance the climate-change debate. We're funded consumer-owned utility companies, concerned citizen and Western Fuels Association.

IF YOU THINK THERE'S A HIDDEN AGENDA, YOU'RE JUST NOT LOOKING.



GREENING EARTH SOCIETY

GREENING EARTH SOCIETY OR

READINGS

[Essay]

FIELD TRIPS

By Stuart Dybek, in the Fall 1999 issue of Bomb, *a quarterly published in New York City. Dybek's memoir "Thread" appeared in the September 1998 issue of* Harper's Magazine. *He is currently at work on a collection of personal essays.*

We took two field trips in grade school. The first was a tour of the Bridewell House of Corrections and the Cook County Jail. The prison complex was on 26th and California, only blocks away from St. Roman School, so, herded by nuns into an orderly column with the girls in front and the boys bringing up the rear, our fifth-grade class walked there. The nuns must have thought it a perfect choice for a field trip, as not only was there a suitable cautionary lesson to be learned but it saved on bus fare too.

Filing from school at midmorning felt like a jailbreak. Paired up with pals, we traipsed down California gaping like tourists at the familiar street coming to life—delivery trucks double-parking before greasy spoons, open doors revealing the dark interiors of bars still exhaling boozy breath from the night before. Some of the kids, like Bad Brad Norky—already twice convicted of stealing the class milk money—were hoping to see various relatives who were doing time at County. Others, like my best friend, Rafael Mendoza, were hoping to catch a glimpse of a mob boss, or a mass murderer, or the infamous psychopath Edward Gein, a farmer from the wilds of Illinois who supposedly cannibalized his victims and tanned their skins to make lamp shades and clothes. Gein fascinated us. Some years later, when I was in high school, I bought a pair of hand-stitched moccasin-top gray suede shoes that, when soaked with rain, turned a cadaverous shade, and my buddies took to calling them my Gein shoes. That, in turn, developed into a neighborhood expression of appreciation for any article of clothing that looked sharp in an unconventional way: *muy Gein, man,* or *Gein cool.* At the same time, the term could also be used as an insult: *Your mama's a Gein.*

Even more of a draw than the murderers and celebrity psychos at County, at least for the boys, was the promise of getting a look at the electric chair. We'd heard it was kept in the basement. Local legend had it that a sudden burst of static on the radio or a blink in TV reception, say during *The Howdy Doody Show,* meant that they'd just fried someone at County. We thought maybe we'd get to hold the hand of the warden or whoever flipped the switch at executions. But if an electric chair was there at all, we never got to see it.

Surprisingly, the most memorable part of the trip occurred not at County, where the men, penned in what the tour guide informed us were sixty-square-foot cells, mostly ignored us, but rather at Bridewell, when they took us through the women's wing. The inmates there, prostitutes mainly, saw the nuns and made some comments about being brides of Christ that were truly educational:

"Yo, Sister—what kind of meat do the Pope eat on Friday? Nun."

"Hey, Sister Mary Clement, when I dress up like that I get more tuppence!"

The nuns didn't respond, but their faces assumed the same impassive, inwardly suffering expressions that the statues of martyrs wore, and they began to hurry us through the rest of the tour.

A hefty female guard rapped the bars with her stick and shouted, "Pipe down, Taffy, there's kids, for godssake."

And Taffy laughed, "Shee-it, Bull Moose! When I was their age I was doing my daddy."

And from another cell someone called, "Amen, girl!"

The next year the nuns avoided the jail and instead took us to the stockyards, a trip that required a bus. A rented yellow school bus was already waiting when we got to school that morning, and we filed on, boys sitting on the left side of the aisle, girls on the right. I sat next to a new kid, Joseph Bonnamo. Usually, new kids were quiet and withdrawn, but Bonnamo, who'd only been at St. Roman for a couple weeks, was already the most popular boy in class. Everyone called him Joey B. His father had been a Marine lifer and Joey B. was used to moving around, he said. He'd moved around so much that he was a grade behind, a year older than everyone else, but he didn't seem ashamed of it. He was a good athlete, and all the girls had crushes on him. That included Sylvie Perez, who over the summer had suddenly, to use my mother's word, "developed." Exploded into bloom was closer to the truth. Along with the rest of the boys, I pretended as best I could not to notice—it was too intimidating to those of us who'd been her classmates for years. But not to Joey B.

"Like my old man says, tits that size have a mind of their own," he confided to me on the way to the Yards, "and hers are thinking, 'Feel me up Joey B.'"

"How do you know?"

His hand dropped down and he clutched his crotch. "Telepathy."

"Class," Sister Bull Moose asked, "do you know our tradition when riding a bus on a field trip?"

"A round pound?" Joey B. whispered to me.

No one raised a hand. We didn't know we had a tradition—as far as we knew we were the first class from St. Roman ever to take a bus on a field trip.

Sister Bull Moose's real name was Sister Amabilia, but she had a heft to her that meant business, and she wielded the baton she used to conduct choir practice not unlike the guard we'd seen wielding a nightstick at Bridewell a year before, so my friend Rafael had come up with the nickname. From within her habit, a garment that appeared to have infinite storage capacity, she produced the pitch pipe also used in choir practice and sustained a note. "Girls

[Poem]

THE WATER INSPECTOR

By John Ashbery, in the Fall issue of Conjunctions. *Ashbery's most recent book is* Girls on the Run: *A Poem.*

Scramble the "Believer" buttons. Silence the chickens. We have more important things, like intelligence. We say so many cruel things in a lifetime, and yet. In a whorehouse, young, I obfuscated. Destiny was this and that, no it was *about* this and that. Do you see what I'm saying? Nobody needs the whole truth.

Even so we exact repetition. The beat goes on. Terribly surprised about the report, about your father's death, but these things happen. Often the dead are found next day, alive but shaken, wondering what it was that happened to them, trembling beneath the cellar door. And we too wonder what happens when the sky as we know it cracks in two. Beetle voices serenade us. The earth and its fountains can't do enough for us, yet we remember, shaken too, like in the old days.

We were reading and there came a knock at the door. The water inspector, we thought, and of course no one was there. Stung, and stung again. So we proceed, always on course, always begging the stars to tell us what happened, whether we were to learn really, were we on course? Always the silence says yes, you can go home now, round up your siblings, head for the nearest wooded area, and thank that will help.

I was once surprised but lay and brooded, my life at my feet now, my breath like weeds left out on a lake. It must have come to me, it (how) does not matter, just as I matter.

I thank in the thank I ask always element in my thanks, but aware, for them, what I consider [illegible] all these needs of hitting. Awkward yes, and not a little disconcerting.



From On the Eve, Moscow 1998, *a series of photographs by Mary Berridge. The photographs were taken on a Mac Duo 2300c and are on display beginning next month at the Open Society Institute in New York City.*

start, and boys come in on 'Merrily merrily merrily . . .'"

Joey B. sang in my ear, "Row row row your boner . . ."

At the Yards there was a regular tour. First stop was the Armour packing plant, where the meat was processed into bacon and sausage. I think the entire class was relieved that the smell wasn't as bad as we worried it might be. We knew we had traveled to the source of what in the neighborhood was called "the brown wind" or "the glue pee-ew factory," a stench that settled over the south side of Chicago at least once a week. My father said it was the smell of boiling hooves, hair, and bone rendered to make soap. I'd once dissected a bar of Ivory on which I'd noticed what appeared to be animal hair to see if there were also fragments of bone and if beneath the soap smell I could detect the reek of the Yards.

We left the processing plant for the slaughterhouse and from a metal catwalk looked upon the scene below, where workmen wearing yellow hard hats and white coats smeared with gore heaved sledgehammers down on the skulls of the steers that, urged by electric prods, filed obediently through wooden chutes.

Every time the hammer connected, my friend Rafael would go, "Ka-boom!"

The steer would drop, folding at the knees.

"That has to smart," Joey B. said.

For the finale they took us to where the hogs were slaughtered. A man with hairy, thick, spattered forearms, wearing rubber boots and a black rubber apron shiny with blood, stood holding a butcher knife before a vat of water. An assembly line of huge, squealing hogs, suspended by their hind legs, swung past him, and as each hog went by, the line would pause long enough for the man to slit the hog's throat. He did it with a practiced, effortless motion, and I wondered how long he'd had the job, what it had been like on his first day, and if it was a job I could ever be desperate enough to do. Up to then, my idea of the worst job one could have

[illegible] driver. I didn't think I could drive through rush hour traffic, learn the same street over and over, while not one chance, as bus drivers had to do in those days. But watching the man kill hogs, I began to think that driving [illegible]

With each hog there was the same terrified squeal, but louder than a squeal, more like a [illegible] then the accompanying gurgle of blood. [illegible] Blood splashed to the tile and in the [illegible] gutter of water, where it rushed [illegible] away. The man would plunge the [illegible] into the vat of water before him, and the water clouded pink, then he'd withdraw the shining blade just as the next squealing hog arrived. Meanwhile, the hogs who'd just cranked by, still alive, their mouths, nostrils, and slit throats pumping dark red gouts, were swung into a bundle of hanging bodies to bleed. Each new carcass slammed into the others, causing a few weak squeals and a fresh gush of blood.

The tour guide apologized that we couldn't see the sheep slaughtered. He said that some people thought the sheep sounded human, like children, and that bothered some people, so they didn't include it on the tour.

It made me wonder who killed the sheep. We'd seen the men with sledgehammers and the man with a knife. How were the sheep slaughtered? Was it a promotion to work with the sheep—someplace they sent only the most expert slaughterers—or was it the job that nobody at the Yard wanted?

"Just like the old Utah electric chair," Rachel complained.

"How's that?" Joey B. asked.

"They would've let us see the chair when we went to the jail last year."

At the end of the tour, on our way out of the processing plant, they gave each of us a [illegible] hot dog. Not a Chicago-style poppy-seed bun, mustard—never ketchup—onion, relish, tomato, pickle, peppers, celery salt. This was a cold hot dog wrapped in a napkin. We hadn't had lunch and everyone was starving. We rode back on the bus eating our hot dogs, singing "*Frère Jacques*."

I was sitting by the window, Joey B. beside me, still with me—the rule to keep him [illegible] student predictably [illegible] bus. Peter [illegible] was a great opportunity, but I could never think of anything to say to girls in a situation like that.

"Sylvie," Joey B. said, "you liking that hot [illegible]

"[illegible]

"[illegible] told me to tell her."

It [illegible] the [illegible] thing I'd ever heard, but all she did was blush, smile at him, and take another demure nibble.

I knew it was against the rules, but I cracked opened the window of the bus and tried to flick my [illegible] up hot dog napkin into a passing convertible. Sister Bull Moose saw me do it.

"Why does there always have to be one who's not mature enough to take on trips?" she asked, rhetorically. For punishment I had to give up my seat and stand in the aisle, which I did to an indifference on the part of Sylvie Perez that was the worst kind of scorn.

"Since you obviously need special attention, Stuart, you can sing us a round," Sister said. Once, during our weekly music hour, looking in my direction, she'd inquired, "Who is singing like an off-key foghorn?" When I'd shut up, still moving my mouth but only pretending to sing, she'd said, "That's better."

"I don't know the words," I said.

"Oh, I think you do. *Dor-mez-vous, dor-mez-vous, Bim Bam Boom*. They're easy."

Joey B. patted the now empty seat beside him as if to say to Sylvie, "Now you can sit here."

Sylvie rolled her pretty eyes toward Sister Bull Moose and smiled, and Joey B. nodded that he understood and smiled back, and they rode like that in silence, communicating telepathically while I sang.

[Notes]

A CLASS OUTING

From thirty notes sent to writer Dan Woog by eighth-graders in Connecticut after Woog visited their class to talk about growing up gay. The notes appeared last fall on Inside Out, *an online magazine. Woog's book* Friends and Family: True Stories of Gay America's Straight Allies *was published in September.*

Dear Dan Woog,

Thank you for coming to our class the other day. Although some people in the class (Matt) didn't agree with you, who cares because he is stupid. I think it's all right so keep going! To me there is nothing wrong with it. Thank you!

Bridget

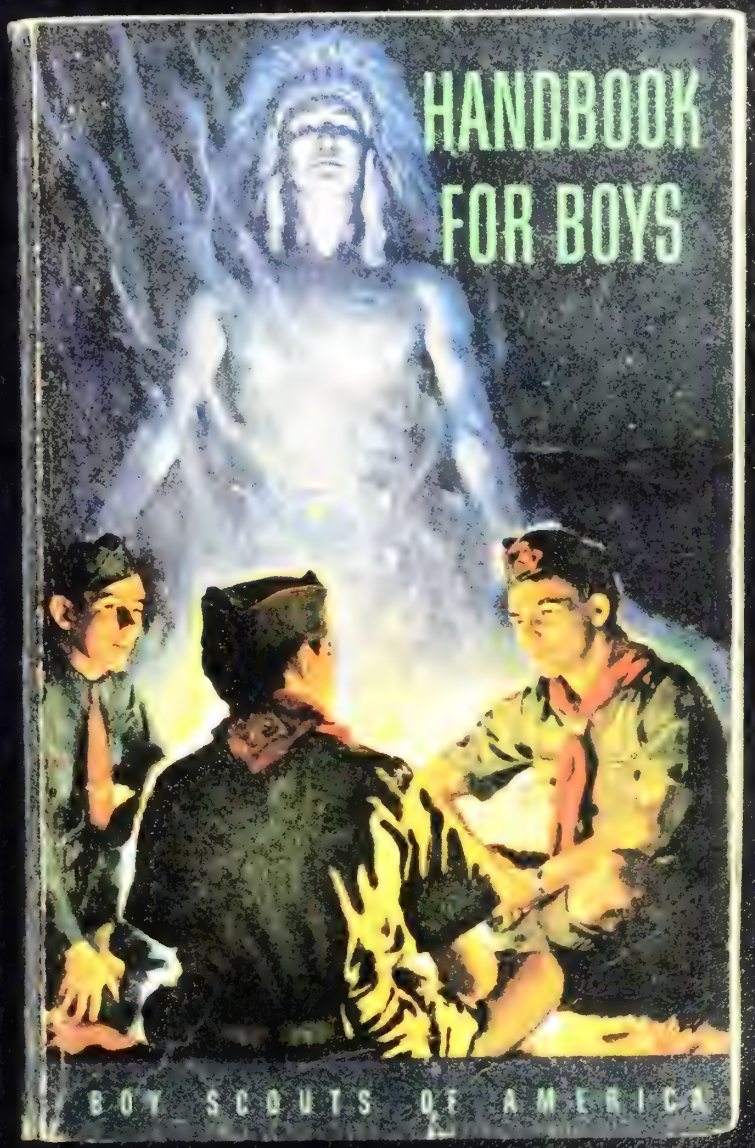
Dear Mr. Woog,

Thank you for informing me about homosexuality. Some of the things you told me informed me. Thank you very much. You have a lot of courage to be gay. Some people would kick your butt if you told them. Just to let you know, I think that some people in our class are gay.

Sincerely,

[illegible]

July 10, 1955. Forced to use for kindling while earning merit badge.



May 2, 1999. Found on Alibris for grandson's first backyard camp-out.

alibris
www.alibris.com

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Books you thought you'd never find.

[Promotion]

THERE'S A PLACE IN FRANCE

From a travel brochure produced by the French government tourist bureau [illegible] last September in the United States.

Outstripping all the other countries in Europe for just the right mix of fun and sophisticated culture, France is a gay friendly destination *par excellence*. Whether you want to watch a can-can show or even be in one, or take in the monumentally moving sights of grand Gothic cathedrals, royal castles in the Loire Valley, or art-inspired art collections, France is the *in* place to be *out*.

At the heart of Paris is a liquid valley, the Seine River. In warm weather the river's walkways attract sunbathers, and all year round the banks are lined with booksellers' stalls, lovers ambling hand in hand, silent contemplative wanderers, often a group of tango dancers here, an impromptu gathering of musicians there, and always the quiet fishermen with their long thin poles bobbing at the waves. At the west, the iconic Eiffel Tower, erect in all its non-glory, dominates the Seine, and as you travel farther east, there's the Musée d'Orsay, the Louvre, and wonderful apartment buildings that will make you ache with envy.

Are you among those who've always suspected that in a past life you were "to the manor born"? France's chateaux present hundreds of opportunities to bring out the king, or queen, in you, and to satisfy whatever appetites you may have.

Champagne, the most celebratory wine of France, is, of course, that bubbly concoction that renders you even more giddy. It is credited to a certain Dom Pérignon, a monk living with his brothers at the Hautvillers abbey around [illegible] and to have proclaimed when he tried it, "I am tasting stars!" If you, too, would like to experience that mystical, then head to Champagne, the province east of Paris.

The biggest contribution to spirits in the southwestern Armagnac region are the most distinguished brandies in the world. The town of Condom has an Armagnac Museum and plans to open another museum dedicated to the love [illegible] that has been there the town's name.

Who could resist sending a postcard: "In [illegible] Wish you were here."

Dear Dan,

Hi! Thanx for coming. I really injoyed you talk about gay people yesterday. I really learned that there can be different people in life, and sorry for laughen at you because it was the first time I ever talk to a gay guy like you so I hope you forgive me.

Sincerely,
Chamone

Dear Dan,

Thanks for coming in and telling us how it is in the gay life. And from now on I won't make fun of people like you. Well, try to come back. See ya.

P.S. I am not gay.

Casey

Dear Dan Woog,

Thank you for coming into our class and talking about gay and lesbian people. I am homophobic, but if you want to be gay you can be gay.

Sincerely,
Mr. Sullivan's 8th grade class student

Dear Mr. Woog,

Thank you very much for comming to visit us. Your talk was very interesting. I'm glad that your proud to be a faget. There aren't many people who are. I feel bad for the people who tease gay people. They're regular people. No different. Except for who they like. But I really respect gays as well as others.

Kimberly

[Symposium]

ALL THE PHILOSOPHER KING'S MEN

From a May 13, 1971, conversation among President Richard Nixon, John D. Ehrlichman, and H. R. Haldeman. On October 5, 1999, the National Archives made available to the public 445 hours of previously unreleased Oval Office tapes. The following dialogue was transcribed by Chicago Tribune *reporter James Warren.*

RICHARD NIXON: We're going to [put] more of these little Negro bastards on the welfare rolls at $2,400 a family—let people like Pat Moynihan and [special consultant] Leonard Garment and others believe in all that crap. But I don't believe in it. Work, work—throw 'em off the rolls. That's the key.

[illegible] The key is Reagan's

neutrality. If Reagan blasts this thing and says it's not strong enough on the work requirement end, that will be very bad.

NIXON: I have the greatest affection for them [blacks], but I know they're not going to make it for 500 years. They aren't. You know it, too. The Mexicans are a different cup of tea. They have a heritage. At the present time they steal, they're dishonest, but they do have some concept of family life. They don't live like a bunch of dogs, which the Negroes do live like.

EHRLICHMAN: The Mexican American is not as good as the Mexican. You go down to Mexico—they're clean, they're honest, they're moral.

NIXON: Mexico is a much more moral country.

EHRLICHMAN: Monterrey, Cuernavaca. Go into slum areas, and by God they come out with clean shirts on a Sunday morning.

NIXON: The church. You find a helluva lot less marijuana use in Mexico than the United States.

EHRLICHMAN: The unions are actually a stronger force down there than the church.

NIXON: For what?

EHRLICHMAN: For conduct and social policy.

NIXON: . . . CBS . . . glorifying homosexuality.

EHRLICHMAN: A panel show?

H. R. HALDEMAN: No, it's a regular show. It's on every week. It's usually just done in the guy's home. It's usually just that guy, who's a hard hat.

NIXON: That's right; he's a hard hat.

EHRLICHMAN: He always looks like a slob.

NIXON: Looks like Jackie Gleason.

HALDEMAN: He has this hippie son-in-law, and usually the general trend is to downgrade him and upgrade the son-in-law—make the square hard hat out to be bad. But a few weeks ago, they had one in which the guy, the son-in-law, wrote a letter to you, President Nixon, to raise hell about something. And the guy said, "You will not write that letter from my home!" Then said, "*I'm* going to write President Nixon," took off all those sloppy clothes, shaved, and went to his desk and got ready to write his letter to President Nixon. And apparently it was a good episode.

EHRLICHMAN: What's it called?

NIXON: "Archie's Guys." Archie is sitting here with his hippie son-in-law, married to the screwball daughter. The son-in-law apparently goes both ways. This guy. He's obviously queer—wears an ascot—but not offensively so. Very clever. Uses nice language. Shows pictures of his parents. And so Archie goes down to the bar. Sees his best friend, who used to play pool . . . and they all . . . Archie, stick . . . this . . . and that. Then the con comes into the bar.

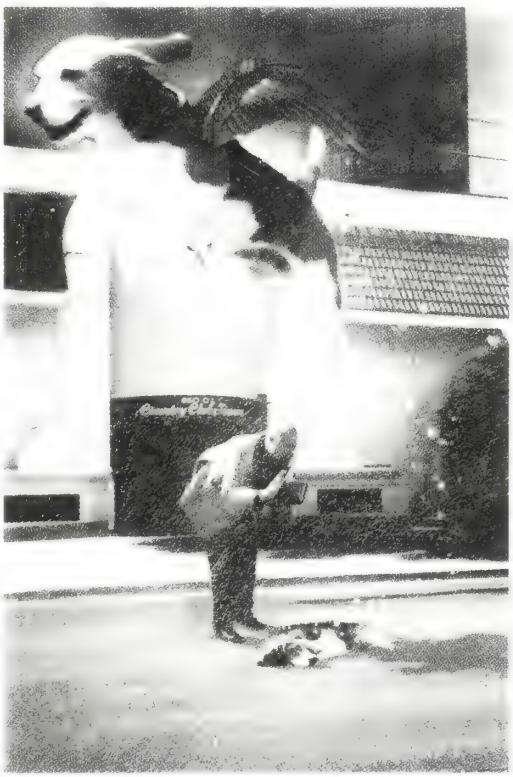
I don't mind the homosexuality. I can't stand it. Now, orthodox, old Hunt. I don't think you glorify it on public television, homosexuality, even more than you do whores. We all know we have weaknesses. But, goddammit, what does it do to your children? It does to kids? You know what happened the Greeks? Homosexuality destroyed them. Sure, Aristotle was a homo. We all know that. So was Socrates.

EHRLICHMAN: But he never had the influence television had.

NIXON: You know what happened to the Romans? The last six Roman emperors were fags. Neither in a public way. You know what happened to the popes? They were

[Apotheosis]

REX IN PEACE



[illegible]

TAKE MY PREGNANT WIFE—PLEASE

T

HAVANA BE YOUR VALENTINE



BEER AND LOGGING ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

MASTER OF HIS OWN DOMAIN

helmets on! On our bicycle! Unbelievable! I walk down the street without helmets! Let's stop the madness before the sadness! Peace!

What's up! We took a ride to Woodstock, held there but found out different. It's a really cool place with hippies all in the streets, incense in the air, and tie-dyes everywhere. On our way back my throttle cable broke and I tle from behind me. She did a very good job. We played bingo last night and lost. Spread

What's up! Martha's Vineyard was pretty wild! are only two towns to drink at! One place we went to was called the Ritz Cafe. Thanks tour to see Plymouth Rock! It was very cool! I but it wasn't that big, about the size of a small picnic table with the the Broken Spoke Saloon and drank there! I entered a tattoo contest but they didn't care for

What's happening! Since last time, we have done a lot. We made it to a big buffet on our way to New Hampshire, and it was great! We much we took our lobster with us! Then out! We brought our own liquor on board and the world's largest quarry, called your eyes on the news for me and my cam-

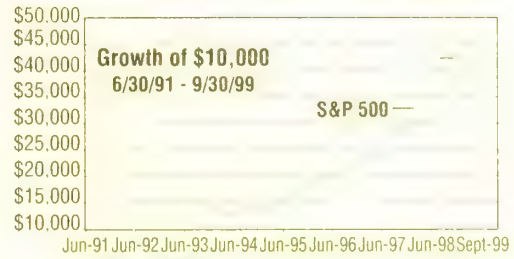
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Although the Fund is no-load, certain fees and expenses apply to a continued investment. DSIL Investment Services LLC, Distributor. 10/99

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and some Baptist Bible college. It was a pretty wild time. I then drove down to Chicktown, where I am at today. It's been a party since Day after day, night after night. It seems that way anytime you go back to your hometown, and not to mention running for president of the USA. I did some great campaigning at about 8 bars in Will County. Peace! Spread the word and God bless you all! David H. Watt, Presidential Candidate for the USA in the Year 2000

[Lexicon]

QUIT AVRAMIZING, YOU SQUIRTUS

From [illegible] *published by* Oxford English Dictionary. *Available in paperback July 1999 for* [illegible]

Avramize—*v.* to present a formidable argument that confidently displays a thorough knowledge of a particular subject matter, despite having only a scant understanding of the topic in question. "Before you answer the question, let me warn you not to avramize."

Birskies—*adj.* cold. "Turn up the heat when you get home. Last night was *birskies*." Originated in Wyoming, possibly by Sarah [illegible].

Cheesehead—*n.* 1) what that looks like cheese 2) a person who wears the hat. 3) a person residing in the state of Wisconsin.

Cuntify—*v.* to make something all cunty-like.

Diffabled—*adj.* the word "disabled" separates the "abled" from the "disabled." We all have different abilities, we are all children of "God." Thus people are just *diffabled*.

Fyuh—*adv.* [illegible] the Homer Simpson exclamation of frustration, popularized by Spuds in *The Last Resort*. Spuds recently used the term repeatedly to express frustration and exasperation.

Hitchcock—*n.* [illegible] I mentioned that I appeared in three films directed by the World's Worst Filmmaker. "I became the [illegible] actor to be murdered in a motel shower and then slapped the crap out of in the bathroom."

Nyaah—*n.* [illegible] "Nyaah" is a mouth-noise [illegible] "Nyaah" is semantically it means "no."

Pillowcase—*n.* [illegible] sand.

Puppies—*n.* [illegible] for women's breasts, used by wrestling fans across America.

Shrimping—*n.* the practice of putting your partner's toes in your mouth is known to some people as *shrimping*, and in one sense this seems like rather a good term.

Snirtle—*v.* to laugh politely at something said by another that is not funny.

Squirtus—*n.* a name given to someone who annoys the living shit out of you.

Twiddle—*v.* when two people walk a converging course down a hallway and to avoid a collision both step aside in the same direction and then try stepping aside in the opposite direction, thus continuing on a collision course.

Winet—*n.* a pubic hair with a small piece of poo attached, generally found on males.

Zool—*v.* to mewl piteously and constantly, with the mouth wide open, without apparent need. "Did you just hear a *zool*? No, where is the *zooler*?"

[Journal]

CATS, NOW AND FOREVER

From Last Words: The Final Journals of William S. Burroughs, *published this month by Grove/Atlantic. Burroughs died on August 2, 1997*

November 14 [illegible] Calico was killed at 19th and Centennial. I heard about it from Jose. Tom had seen the cat by side of the road. In the empty spaces where the cat was, that hurt physically. Cat is part of me. Mornings since, I break into uncontrollable sobbing and crying when I remember where she used to be, sit, move, etc. No question of histrionics. It just happens.

[illegible] You just live long enough, and you will become the grand old man of letters, cluttered with his very tired old jokes. Some bordering on the *risqué*. (The grand old man of letters will accrete around you with cashmere shawls.)

The man in a cheap hotel makes it with lady in next room. Next day, as they meet on a landing, she says: "Bonjour, Monsieur," wiggling her little finger suggestively. He responds by raising his hat and placing the top side over his crotch: "Bonjour, Madame!"

At a party, there was someone who could do a hilarious Jack Kerouac. I did an imitation of Roosevelt: "My

friends, I hate war. Eleanor hates war. And I hate Eleanor." Heh, heh. It was a long time ago, and it wasn't funny even then.

Yes, where are the snows of yesteryear? And the speedballs I used to know? Well, I guess it's time for my Ovaltine and a long good night.

DECEMBER 2, 1996 Every time I put out three cat pans instead of four, the death of Calico hits again—or I see the place where she used to eat, beside the sink. All the empty places. *The memory of what has been and never more will be.* Killed by a car, she left with me all the places she used to be and never more would be.

If I thought the driver did it deliberately—if then I could find him—I have a catalogue here advertising a vial of Road Kill. A touch in his car, on the porch, sent in envelopes under his door.

On plane—sleeping passengers—dream flashes: "My creeping opponents say that I am trading on my reputation as a writer to gain notice as a painter. Of course I am. In this life one is well advised to play the cards one has for all they are worth. If one is lucky enough to be born with a beautiful face and the corresponding physical attributes, instead of moaning, 'Oh people only want me for my face,' play your face card. In youth, play your youth cards. In old age, claim the privileges of age, and get your snout in the public trough before it dries up."

DECEMBER 15, 1996 To miss a cat is to miss your cat, part of *you*. It hurts physically, like an amputation. There on top of the sofa, on the side of the sink where she always ate. It hurts.

As Wordsworth, that old child molester, said:

> She died, and left to me
> This heath, this calm, this quiet scene;
> The memory of what has been,
> And never more will be.

DECEMBER 22, 1996 A boy wished his brother dead, and his father in the package. When this wish emerged in his "life review," he said: "I would rather sacrifice my own life." And of course he meant it, but he didn't feel it. So he doesn't even get a whiff of grace.

In despair he threw himself somewhere and was saved by his love for cats. No priest or psychiatrist could do it. It was "meow, meow, meow."

Is there any final honesty of character?

JANUARY 15, 1997 Out to feed the fish. All the places where Spooner used to be hit me with a physical impact. The cat was part of myself. He died Friday, October 4, 1996. "Sorry he didn't make it," the vet says.

I *knew* when I held him in my lap he was dying—then he jumped down and pissed under the table.

[illegible] I must tell my cats. How to cover a dead mouse with leaves. How to view. I want the names of the cats. His Highness. I can put one of my cats on them. It will give me something to [illegible] a few brighter up fellows before they [illegible] nameless assholes. I will make a list and name them one after another.

Like the new rich in St. [illegible] Xmas [illegible] ter's coming-out party. [illegible] they were mad. He made a list of all the invitees [illegible] show. And named them one after another. It gave meaning to his life. He crossed out his name on his deathbed, gave a contented belch, and died. He was a fully fulfilled evil old man.

I've a weakness for evil old men.

[illegible] Of this anthology of cat horror, *Purest of the Pure*, edited by Ellen Datlow, and *The Cat From Hell*, by Stephen King, is a hoot.

How evil can an evil old bastard get? Well, "this evil old recluse"—now, it isn't easy to be evil in a vacuum. Oh sure, his Will, hatred of his sisters and everybody. But what does an evil old recluse *do*? Just sit and be evil? Very difficult, unless one is an adept at evil and a made man, got all the medals.

Here I sit with my three old cats, getting

[Product Description]

DRUNK ON WORDS

From the label of Allegro Cuvée, a red wine from Estrella, in Spain, published in the March issue of the Wine Spectator.

Aging: In American oak barrels for one year, twelve months in barrels and six months in bottles.

Sensorial Tasting: Allegro Cuvée has a deep, obscure, red and cherry color, with a good cloak, clean and brilliant with reflexes of medium evolution that show tiles. It has aromas of breeding, prevailing new wood over an elegant and perfumed bottom of spices, and matured fruit fruits well united and with balsamic memories. It is vivid on the tongue, with a great acidity very well integrated, a solid, full, silky, and greasy way, and a tasty and well-structured final. It is large in retronasal.



depressing.

THREE MEASURES OF LONELINESS

furniture. One couple found nothing of interest, but the second couple fell for an old bureau with four drawers and curved inlays, which they agreed would, once refinished, look awfully good in their bedroom. This second couple agreed on a maximum price they would pay and were thrilled, after a brief run of lackluster bidding, to secure the bureau for much less.

After the auction, the second couple collected their bureau, and the first couple helped them load it into their van. But while they were loading it, one of the drawers slid out onto the ground. The husband of the first couple bent to pick up the drawer and, noticing that it was lined with a yellowed scrap of newspaper, paused to read what was printed there. He was astonished to find that the newspaper was dated just a few days after his own birthday several decades before. Even more astonishing, however, was the fact that the newspaper was from his own hometown, many hundreds of miles from here, and that the particular page the drawer was lined with bore the announcement of his own birth. The man's wife and their friends paused to discuss the coincidence for a while, and the man was given the newspaper page and brought it home as a keepsake.

The fact was, the man's parents had been killed in a train accident in the late 1960s, and he knew very little about their lives. Soon he grew obsessed with the bureau and, convinced it held the key to his buried past, plotted ways to get into the second couple's bedroom to see it. He began stopping by their house on his lunch hour and struck up a secret friendship with the wife of the second couple, who stayed home during the day to care for her baby. Their friendship developed into a romantic affair, and most days, after they made love and the woman fell asleep, the man would examine the bureau in minute detail, opening and closing the drawers and touching the woodwork with trembling hands.

Eventually the man and woman left their families, married each other, and moved very far away. It wasn't until they arrived in their new town that the man realized the bureau had not come with them. The woman had left it with her ex-husband, who was the one who had liked it in the first place. At first the man was heartbroken, but since there was nothing he could do, he gave up thinking about it and concentrated on his new life, which was neither better nor worse than the one he had left behind.

CRISIS

A priest of our acquaintance occasionally suffers a crisis of faith, and at these times we often encounter him in a local bar. He sits on a stool watching himself in the mirror behind the bar and drinks [illegible] as he [illegible] his dilemma. Then he returns to the rectory and sleeps well into the next afternoon.

One recent evening he described his crisis: he was unsure of the true nature of sin and how it related to the ultimate salvation or damnation. He explained that he had, in the past, broken one or more of the Ten Commandments and in the wake of his transgression begged the Lord for forgiveness. In one instance, he had of late taken the Lord's name in vain upon smashing his thumb with a hammer, coveted an attractive young parishioner, and bought a lottery ticket, which he supposed was a kind of idolatry. After his penance, however, he wondered if the Lord really had forgiven him. If He had, then what was the point of the Commandments? Surely they had no meaning if breaking them could be forgiven so easily. On the other hand, if he wasn't forgiven, then his damnation was certain, and there was no good reason to follow them to the letter anyway.

He wondered, then, if this very soul-searching was a form of absolution, and if so, did his opportunistic awareness of that fact negate its effectiveness? And of course it was possible that this very awareness of the possible value of the soul-searching represented an honesty and integrity that the Lord might well appreciate. Which is to say that the priests and saints were either truly blessed, the only people who would get into Heaven, or they were trying much harder than they had to and consequently were fools.

It is worth noting that we have seen our friend the priest at the pulpit from time to time, and neither his message nor his delivery is in the least bit inspiring. However, when we see him at the bar, he is charming and thought provoking, and in the wake of these encounters we always report guiltily to church.

TEA

In the years after my father died, my mother took to a certain brand of tea, which she drank four times daily: once at breakfast, twice in mid-afternoon, and before or after the evening dinner. She drank it with milk and honey, though sometimes I saw her use granulated sugar when the [illegible] ran out.

This particular tea came in boxes of fifty bags, and every box came with a small pastel-colored ceramic circus figurine. It was a kind of promotion. I believe the tea was called Piccadilly Circus, and there were fifteen different figurines, a lion tamer, an acrobat, a human cannonball. Every once in a while I would be

Racing To The Moon.

Instinct and moonlight guide them to the ocean. For newborn sea turtles, it is a run

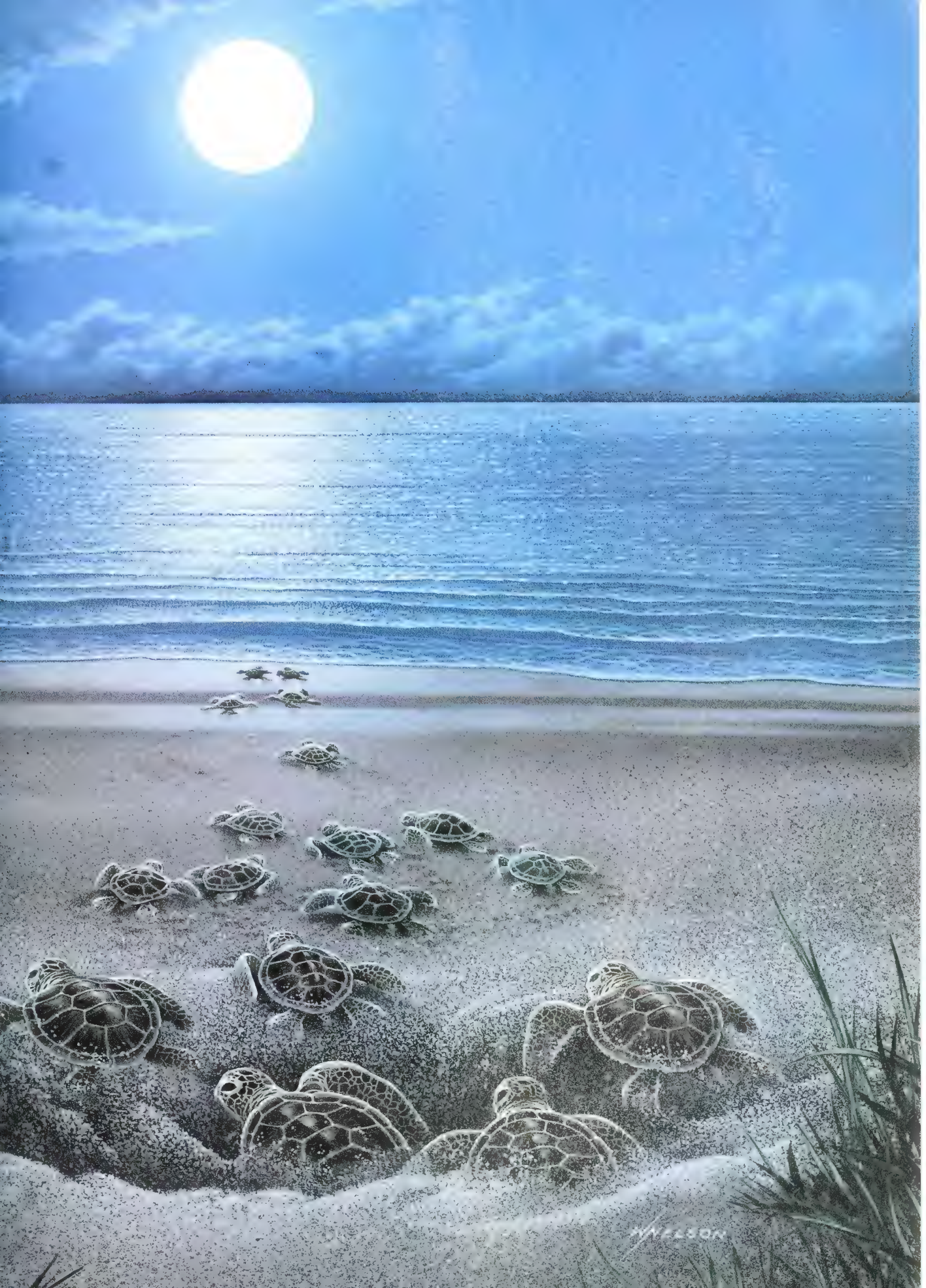


for survival. They must quickly move past predators to the safety of deep water. That's why people working in partnership on Thevenard Island conceal the light from their oil and gas operations. So the turtles won't be drawn off-course. Which helps protect a threatened species by making certain the only light visible is the one that leads home.

Chevron

People Do.

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HANSON

around when my mother unwrapped a new box and took out the figurine. It would sit on the table between us while we drank, and sometimes she would pick it up and turn it over in her hand.

When my mother died and my sister and I sorted through her possessions, we found, in the back of the cellar, a pile of shoeboxes with numbers written on the top: 80, 100, 75. When we opened them, we found the figurines. The numbers on top corresponded to the number of figurines inside.

It wasn't like our mother to keep things; she was no pack rat. Because of this it seemed right to take out the figurines and count them, which we did. There were 420. Sitting there in the dusty cellar, I did the math. Fifty tea bags times 420 boxes of tea was 21,000 cups. If each cup held about 8 ounces of tea, that made 168,000 ounces, which, divided by 128 ounces per gallon (I had to run my finger through the dusty floor here), was more than 1,300 gallons of tea. In my head I expressed this in fifty-gallon drums, about twenty-five of them, stacked up in a big pyramid, and I pictured them stored out in the wind and cold on a cement lot, in back of an airport or warehouse somewhere, behind a tall chain-link fence.

It occurred to me that this was a measure of loneliness, all the tea my mother drank during the twelve years between my father's death and her own. I wondered if she herself thought of it that way. In any event, when I am lonely, it is the pyramid of fifty-gallon drums that I think of, standing in a light snowstorm, with perhaps a little creamy brown tea leaking from the bottom of one of the drums and frozen into a dull, irregular pattern on the pavement below.

[Essay]

VISUALIZING HISTORY

A version of this essay by Simon Schama in Culturefront, *Volume 7, number 1. Schama's most recent book is* Dead Certainties.

Am I the only one who finds it odd that history, the word "history," appears in our TV guides but not in our public school curriculum? Isn't it telling that the History Channel regularly counts 60 million subscribers and emblazons the cheerfully faux-classical golden "H" on its masthead while school history lies wrapped up in the formless, darkened shroud of "Social Studies," intermittently and grudgingly taken out, poked at, peered at, inflicted halfheartedly on students, and then rapidly reinterred in the decent obscurity whence it came? Whoever the smart types were at A&E who dreamed up the idea of the History Channel, their betting hunch (vindicated to fabulously profitable effect) clearly presupposed that there was an enormous audience out in cableland that included many wounded fugitives from the tedium of public-school social studies, ready and eager to consume stories from the past; and that television—the cool, impatiently contemporary, novelty-driven, jump-cut-paced medium, on the face of it constitutionally incompatible with the necessarily often deliberate, explanatory tempo of historical narrative—was nonetheless the perfect medium for assuaging the unsatisfied pangs of historical curiosity.

Designers of the social studies curriculum for New York State (in common with their counterparts across the country), on the other hand, have for generations taken precisely the opposite view: that the pastness of history is its prohibitively embarrassing liability. John Dewey, who was among the group that eighty years ago made this determination, allowed that "a knowledge of the past and its heritage is of great significance when it enters into the present, but not otherwise." But in terms of equipping our children with the light and skipping gait they would need to jog through the complexities and perplexities of the next millennium, history was, literally, a drag. It could justify its place in a curriculum (where hours are spent in briefing students on the perils of adolescence) only if it were made a dependent auxiliary of the present, the clattering old caboose hitched to the powerful locomotive of the contemporary.

So in America at the end of the century Clio, the muse of history, has gone radically schizophrenic: forced to lead a strange and disconnected double life; alternately the flamboyant floozy of popular culture or the defensively furtive, ever-shrinking violet of adolescent education. On the one hand, Popular Clio is unapologetic, entertaining, self-confident; a gadabout in the world of popular culture, not just on the television documentaries but in best-sellers written by the likes of Stephen Ambrose, David McCullough, Doris Kearns Goodwin, and David Remnick, a real presence in the best-conceived historical museums such as the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., where the demand for admission is so overwhelming it has to be carefully rationed. Popular Clio even



Slide Projection: Hannah Lott in Rented Heat Shower Piece, Detroit, 1971. [illegible] Arts, Architecture and Design at The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston.

shows up in feature film after feature film, both big- and small-budget, from anti-Plantagenet Scotland to Omaha Beach, King George's lunacy to Queen Victoria's widowhood.

On the other hand, there is Social Studies Cho-Cho-Dowdy, inarticulate, either obtusely strident or impenetrably mute. And attached to her like a ball and chain is the social studies curriculum, defying me even the best efforts of the most dedicated and energetic teachers to put any kind of spunk in her step. Ask what is wrong with the social studies curriculum and you have to answer "everything." So much is in fact awry that the only cure for its unhistorical, anti-educational character is, once and for all, to put the creature out of its long misery, to scrap the entire sorry mess and start all over again, this time with subjects that are not ashamed to speak their name. Call the study of the past "history," call the study of place "geography," call the study of power "politics," and you will have made a start by at least telling the truth.

Now, the indispensable, ineludible disciplinary method of the study of the past, a study that thoughtful figures from Cicero to Patrick Henry have assumed to be a vital tool for understanding the future, is chronological narrative. When was it that this was first thought of as a chronicle chore instead of the exercise in dramatic storytelling that it really is? And which genius was it who first imagined that children from kindergarten onward, or eighth-graders, or brother-hearted urban high-schoolers might get the idea and take pleasure instead of chronologically ordered stories? Who first arrogantly assumed that children do not in fact enjoy, actually crave, some structure in their knowledge, somehow we have come from? Some [illegible] who had never even tasted with mind or tongue the likes of Thucydides or Livy, Gibbon or Herodotus, Michelet or Carlyle, or Euclides da Cunha;

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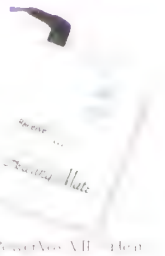
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There was something that the old unapologetic master narratives had and that, it seems to me, popular and public history at its best has in spades, but that is utterly missing from textbook social studies: *picturing*. By this I don't mean what the textbook publishers call "graphics"—the inevitable print of Emanuel Leutze's *Washington Crossing the Delaware* or John Trumbull's *Declaration of Independence*, for these paintings, usually presented as if they were literal reports from the event rather than heavily loaded myth manufactures, impinge on the reader's imagination merely as routine illustrations rather than true visualizations.

The kind of visualization, the kind of expansive, hard-working imagining I'm thinking of, did not begin of course with historical movies or television, or even with history painting. Properly speaking, it began with the *writing* of history itself, or rather a particular kind of history writing—the kind of descriptive picturing that makes even histories meant as the analytical political science of the past credible as human experience. Tacitus, for example, wrote histories of imperial Rome that were in effect a sustained, bitterly sardonic lament for the disappearance of republican virtue (*Igitur verso civitatis statu nihil usquam prisci et integri moris*; "it was thus an altered world and of the old unspoilt Roman character not a trace lingered"). But when he allows himself (and he does so more often than we usually suppose), no one paints more indelibly powerful pictures of the historical moment, all the more unforgettable for being so economically delineated. The one that had the most impact on me when I first read the *Annals* was Tacitus' image of the bones of Varus' Roman legion massacred six years earlier by Arminius' Germans in the Teutoburg Forest, lying about the ground for their successors to discover on the later campaign. In Tacitus' account, those bones do not lie at random but mimic the manner in which the Roman soldiers fell, *medio campi albentia ossa, ut fugerant, ut restiterant, disiecta vel aggerata*; "in the plain were whitening bones, scattered or in little heaps, as the men had fallen fleeing or standing fast. Hard by lay splintered spears and limbs of horses." This could almost be a page from the directorial notebook of an Eisenstein or a Kurosawa, the legion through Tacitus' calculated synecdoche conjuring up, spectrally, the action of the massacre itself from the patterns made by the bones—some groups standing firm, others breaking and running hopelessly to their slaughter.

From its origins the landscape picture that Voltaire would characterize as the "painting of the voice" occupied a crucial place in history's explanatory lexicon. It was always acknowledged, at least from Thucydides on, that immersive description without analytical reflection would be mere unintelligible entertainment; that *historia*, when all was said and done, was *inquisitio*. But equally it was assumed that argument without narration, without potent visual location, would also be arid and philosophical history, course, would fail as public, civic rhetoric

Late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain was the scene of a great reorientation in just this sort of rhetoric. The efforts of an army of inspired antiquaries contributed to the reimagining of England's past and resulted in a huge shift in taste away from the cosmopolitan, international style of eighteenth-century classicism—rational, harmonious, and restrained—and toward a much more emotively colored, local, and theatrically visual sense of the past. Perhaps the most significant of these heroes was Walter Scott, who alone had the gift to turn the magpies' trove of miscellaneously gathered objects, memories, images, into pure narrative and thus into best-selling gold. Soldiers read Scott in the field, sailors read Scott on the poop deck before engagements, assemblies of ladies and gentlemen read Scott between musical interludes, and people were treated to dramatizations of Scott in the theaters. It was not just romantic connections they felt they were getting either. When they read Scott they could belong to lost historical worlds in all their tactile, aural, and material completeness in ways the orthodox, dry-as-dust histories had no hope of conveying.

It was just one such ispirited young historian, reading Scott with ardent attentiveness, who had no hesitation in taking the novelist for an exemplary model. In an essay published in the September 1828 *Edinburgh Review*, Thomas Babington Macaulay set out his *idea desiderata* for the perfect history: "a compound of poetry and philosophy," the "two hostile elements" that, never "have never been known to form a perfect and harmonious" and that "in our own time have been completely and professedly separated." "Good histories," Macaulay confidently asserted, "we have not. But we have good historical romances and good historical essays."

In the course of the essay, Macaulay made it clear who among the novelists he believed had paid proper attention to the minutiae of the past, with an eye to reconstituting them back into a

credible image of the world. He told the apocryphal story of the Lincoln's Inn scholar's apprentice who made a name for himself entirely from the fragments rejected by his master and left on the floor. In that kindly, committal fiction that the master killed himself out of sheer mortification, "as Walter Scott," Macaulay wrote, "in the same manner has used those fragments of truth which historians have scornfully thrown behind them in a more masterly manner than those who have constructed, out of their own fertile imagination, works which even considered as fictions are scarcely less valuable than theirs. But a truly great historian would reclaim those materials which the novelist has appropriated." It was right and fitting, Macaulay made clear, that the philosophical and analytical element of history be properly preserved in order that the powerful and the characteristic institutions and constitutions be clearly delineated. But along with them, seamlessly woven into the inquiry, would be gorgeously textured evocation.

Macaulay was at pains to stress that such writing was not mere entertainment but was necessary if history were to be effective moral and civic education. To work on the sentiment of the people, to give them adequate understanding of what had held them together or had pulled them apart, history, wrote Macaulay, needed to be "received by the imagination as well as the reason. It would be not stored merely, traced on the mind but [made] part of it."

For a while the nineteenth century did indeed produce historians that aspired to burn themselves into the imagination: the great historians Michelet, Carlyle, Bancroft, Parkman, Motley, and Macaulay himself, all in their respective ways the fruit of both instinctive and self-conscious collaboration with literature, the visual, painting, poetry, and theater. This was of course their downfall, as soon as the self-appointed custodians of history discovered [illegible] and that they had all [illegible] the wrong disciplinary nature, the wrong [illegible] were practitioners of. Where exactly now [illegible] modernist [illegible] themselves [illegible] practice?

[illegible] the requirement to [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

NOTES ON A NATIVE SON

I. THE GEORGE W. BUSH SUCCESS STORY

A heartwarming tale about baseball, $1.7 billion, and a lot of swell friends

By Joe Conason

FORTUNE'S CHILD

As George W. Bush's wealthy admirers continue to pack cash into the largest presidential war chest in American history (at last count a staggering $58 million), perhaps the time is ripe to examine how the would-be president became rich himself—quite rich, in fact, if not by the standards of H. Ross Perot or Steve Forbes, at least by the measure of most Americans. Bush, who received $15 million for his share of the Texas Rangers franchise, would be the richest Democratic or Republican nominee since Lyndon Johnson. On the June 1998 day that the baseball team was sold, Bush told reporters, "When it is all said and done, I will have made more money than I ever dreamed . . ."

Indeed. The sum represented an enviable 2,400 percent increase on the $606,000 investment Bush had made in the team nine years earlier, with borrowed money, and a considerable improvement on his own record of losing millions invested by others. Together with his elation about the windfall there may also have been a feeling of vindication for the eldest scion of the Bush family. Although twice elected governor of Texas (in 1994 and again in 1998), the son known as "Dubya" had lived through nearly two decades of business failures, embarrassing bailouts, and eyebrow-raising favors that had besmirched his family's reputation.

The money, coming late in Bush's life, at age fifty-one, is understood not to have corrupted him, and his handlers depict him as a man of religious faith and moral character who will cleanse a White House soiled by scandal. Bush, in their audience-tested Calvinistic fable, is a once-upon-a-time hard-drinking ne'er-do-well transformed into a well-to-do teetotaler. The fact that his political rise has been crowned with material rewards might, in the metaphysics of American capitalism, very well be deemed a sign of righteousness and divine favor.

But viewed in less sentimental terms, the history of George W. and his millions is a success story about a privileged young man who grew up in proximity to money and political power, appreciated the relationship between them, and so learned to live happily ever after with his wealth and his conscience. Not only does the story explain why Bush is so attractive to the corporate leaders and Washington lobbyists now staging his nomination for the presidency, it is also a textbook lesson in modern American civics. We who might soon elect Bush should hear the story, to know how he might act should he achieve the Oval Office. Although the immediate mechanics of the Rangers deal were well documented by the media, the sale of the team was but a moment in the governor's long and still unfolding political and financial relationships with certain fortunate supporters—some of whom, it can

Joe Conason is a political columnist for The New York Observer and a Salon.com columnist. He is the author with Gene Lyons of The Hunting of the President: The Ten-Year Campaign to Destroy Bill and Hillary Clinton *and* [illegible] *(St. Martin's Press).*

reasonable to expect, might be appointed to positions of authority in a new Bush administration. The numbers are complicated, and many of the sums unpredictable, huge, but the power is real and the outcome as observable as, well, a brand-new baseball stadium.

Oil and Other Matters

When his father was still in the White House, developments in the business interests of George W. Bush were occasionally reported by the national media and sometimes scrutinized for evidence of influence peddling and conflicts of interest. His difficult start in the oil business, for example, was documented in Texas newspapers as well as in *Time* magazine and the *Wall Street Journal*, and that period was examined more recently in the *Washington Post* as part of a biographical series on the Republican front runner published last year. But considering Bush's present fame, the details of his early career are not widely known—and they must be revisited briefly here in order to identify the people who made possible his baseball fortune.

MOST HEAVYWEIGHT BUSH'S VENTURE WAS NEAR RUIN WHEN WEALTHY BENEFACTORS SUDDENLY APPEARED WITH FRESH CASH

From the outset of his career, George W. Bush exhibited an impatience that would have embarrassed his father, who underwent a long apprenticeship in the oil business. In 1975, only three years after graduating from Harvard Business School and returning home to Midland, Texas, he incorporated his own oil drilling venture.

Almost simultaneously, he made an even more startling announcement. Again unlike his father and grandfather, who established their fortunes and reputations before running for public office, George W. declared his candidacy for Congress in 1978 from the district that includes Midland. His resume was brief, political credential, aside from a year as president of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity at Yale.

His candidacy seemed almost plausible, however, when he defeated a far more seasoned opponent in the Republican primary. He went on to lose [illegible] the general election, and [illegible] contributed much to his subsequent campaigns. Actually, Bush didn't commence any operations of his oil firm, Arbusto Energy, until early in 1979.

With [illegible] from [illegible] Wall Street financier, George W. assembled a limited partnership of two dozen investors. The Arbusto partners included George W.'s grandmother Dorothy Bush; Rite Aid drugstores chairman Lewis Lehrman, then a rising force in New York Republican politics; William Draper III, a corporate executive and family friend who was later appointed to head the Export-Import Bank; and James Bath, a mysterious Houston aircraft broker who appears to have been fronting for several Saudi Arabian sheiks.

About $3 million poured into Arbusto, producing little oil and no profits but expansive tax shelters. In 1982, George W. changed his company's infelicitous name to Bush Exploration Oil Co. His father by this time was vice president of the United States, but the new company name didn't improve the son's luck or alter the fact that petroleum prices were sinking while interest rates were rising. More than once, Bush's venture was near ruin when wealthy benefactors suddenly appeared with fresh cash. The most generous was Philip Uzielli, an old Princeton buddy of James Baker III, the family friend then serving as chief of staff in the Reagan White House. For the sum of $1 million, Uzielli bought 10 percent of the company at a time in 1982 when the entire enterprise was valued at less than $400,000.

Soon Uzielli's million was gone, too. But just as his company was heading toward failure, George W. met William DeWitt and Mercer Reynolds, a pair of Ohio investors with their own small oil firm, called Spectrum 7. DeWitt, who had graduated from Yale a few years earlier than Bush, happened to be the son of the former owner of the Cincinnati Reds, and he shared Bush's passion for baseball. After a quick courtship the Spectrum 7 partners agreed to merge with Bush Exploration, naming George W. as chairman and CEO and awarding him a substantial share of stock. Although the vice president's son helped Spectrum 7 to raise additional money, catastrophic losses continued. During a six-month period in 1986, Spectrum 7 lost $400,000, and the partners feared creditors would foreclose their remaining assets.

Once more George W. attracted a financial savior. That September, Spectrum 7 was acquired by Harken Energy Corporation, a medium-sized, diversified company. After Bush joined Harken, the largest stock position and a seat on its board were acquired by Harvard Management Company, the private firm that invests the university's endowment. The Harken board gave Bush $600,000 worth of the company's publicly traded stock, plus a seat on its board of directors and a consultancy that paid him up to $120,000 a year. His partners understood perfectly what had happened. As Spectrum 7's former president, Paul Rea, recalled later, the



GEORGE W. BUSH ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL IN DALLAS IN 1998

Harken directors "believed having George's name there would be a big help to them."

Thus ending his years as an oilman with a substantial income and minimal corporate duties, George W. in the spring of 1987 moved his family from Texas to Washington, where he served as "senior adviser" in his father's presidential campaign. Intense and sometimes volatile, he made appearances at fund-raisers and rallies, acted as an emissary to major campaign donors and leaders of the religious right, and occasionally bullied reporters whose publications he disliked. Those confrontations injured his own reputation, but his father rolled to victory over Democrat Michael Dukakis in one of the nastiest elections in decades.

Toward the end of the 1988 campaign, George W. heard from his former Spectrum 7 partner Bill DeWitt that the Texas Rangers were on the market. To make a successful bid, DeWitt would need Texas backers, and the son of the incoming president was perfectly situated to find them. George W. also had a powerful advantage in dealing with the team's owner, an aging Midland oil millionaire named Eddie Chiles, who had been a Bush friend since the 1950s.

For George W., an ardent lifelong fan with no real job, DeWitt's proposal was a providential opportunity. His duties as a director of Harken Energy, though undemanding, offered little chance to improve his résumé. His hopes of running for governor in 1990 had been squelched by moderate party insiders, who complained that he had never "done anything." To acquire the Rangers and thus keep the franchise in Texas would be to become something of profound significance to Texans.

Baseball commissioner Peter Ueberroth was eager to help the son of the new president, but he was not so eager when George W. said the biggest investors in the proposed Rangers syndicate were his old Yale frat brother Roland Betts and Tom Bernstein, Betts's partner in a film-investment concern. Betts and Bernstein were from New York, not Texas.

The indispensable local money came from Richard Rainwater, formerly the chief financial adviser to Sid Bass of Fort Worth. Little known to the general public, Rainwater was famous on Wall Street for growing the Bass inheritance from around $50 million in 1970 to more than $4 billion by the time he left in 1986 to manage his own investments.

Both Bush and Harken thought with Rainwater

in early 1989 to persuade him to join the Rangers syndicate. Rainwater then took effective control of the deal, putting alone Edward "Rusty" Rose, a well-known Dallas investor, to oversee the franchise. Under an agreement worked out by Betts and Rainwater, the title of "managing partner" would be shared between Rusty Rose and George W.—but the president's son would operate under a tight rein. He would function as the new ownership's friendly public face while Rose ran the business.

Bush's stake in the team, just under 2 percent, was among the smallest. He purchased his shares with a $500,000 loan from a Midland bank of which he had been a director and eventually scraped together another $106,000



ENTRANCE TO THE BALLPARK IN ARLINGTON SHORTLY AFTER IT OPENED

to buy out two other limited partners. Rainwater, Rose, and their associates put up $14.2 million; while Bush and Fernstein invested about $6 million; the balance came from smaller investors, loans, and the equity of minority partners in the old Chiles partnership.

Two months after his father's inauguration, George W. Bush called a press conference in Arlington to announce that the Rangers sale had been successfully completed for a price that was later reported to be $86 million. Proclaiming that the new owners would share a [illegible] with fans, he [illegible] promotion [illegible] with the team. While Rainwater, Rose, and all the other partners remained in the background, George W. [illegible] and [illegible] the owner" of the Rangers. He [illegible] and [illegible] printed "baseball cards" bearing his own picture to [illegible].

Meanwhile, George W. maintained a financial [illegible] Harken Energy [illegible] Bahrain [illegible] Exploration [illegible] generous discount, to increase his holdings by more than half. By 1989, however, those shares were falling in value. A series of questionable decisions by chairman Alan Quasha had jeopardized the company's future, and its losses reached $40 million in 1990. Even the company's CEO admitted that its financial statements were "a mess."

Once more, however, the Bush name seems to have provided sudden deliverance—this time in the form of a contract with the emirate of Bahrain. Until 1989 the Bahraini oil minister had been negotiating an agreement for offshore drilling with Amoco, a huge energy conglomerate with decades of worldwide experience. Those talks were abruptly broken off, supposedly because the Bahrainis had decided that a smaller firm would give their project more attention. The Bahraini officials were put in touch with Harken through a former Mobil Oil executive named Michael Ameen. At the same time, Ameen also happened to be working as a consultant to the U.S. State Department, which had assigned him to brief Charles Hostler, the newly confirmed American ambassador to Bahrain (a San Diego real estate investor who had given $100,000 to the Republican Party for the 1988 election).

These several events culminated in a January 1990 announcement that astonished oil-industry analysts: the government of Bahrain had awarded exclusive offshore drilling rights to Harken. "It was a surprise," one top analyst told *Fortune* magazine with dry understatement. Quite apart from Harken's shaky financial condition, the company had never drilled a well anywhere but Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma, and had never drilled undersea at all. So depleted of cash and so deeply in debt was Harken that the company was forced to bring in the more experienced and solvent Bass brothers as equity partners, so that construction on the $25 million project could begin.

Only the presence of President Bush's oldest son could explain Bahrain's extraordinary decision. There was no question that the rulers of Bahrain were aware of his role. In addition to his Harken directorship, George W. sat on the

company's "exploration advisory board," which meant that his name had been mentioned at least twice during initial discussions with Bahraini officials. "They were clearly aware he was the president's son," said Monte Swetman, a former Harken executive who conducted the talks with the emirate's oil ministry.

George W. flatly denied any part in Harken's bid. "Ask the Bahrainis," he replied flippantly when journalists asked whether they had been enticed by his name. Harken has said that Bush was not involved in the Bahrain deal. Later, Bush claimed he had opposed the project because Harken was not "prepared."

However it was procured, the Bahrain contract pushed up the price of Harken stock from $4.50 to $5.50 in a matter of weeks. And on June 22, 1990, six months after the contract was announced, George W. quietly sold off 212,140 shares, or two thirds of his interest, which grossed him $848,560. He used most of the proceeds to pay off the bank loan he had taken a year earlier to finance his portion of the Texas Rangers deal. A few weeks later, in early August, Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Saddam's aggression drove down the share prices of every oil company doing business in the Gulf, including Harken, whose shares fell to $3.12.

By the time George W. unloaded his Harken stock in late June, diplomatic alarms had been sounding in the Bush White House about Saddam's aggressive intentions. Although there is no evidence that the president's son was tipped off about the impending Gulf crisis, he certainly had reason to know that Harken was still in trouble. He served on the company's three-member audit committee and also on a special "fairness committee" appointed that spring to consider how a corporate restructuring would affect the value of the company's outstanding shares. Two months after Bush sold the bulk of his Harken holdings, the company posted losses for the second quarter of well over $20 million and its shares fell another 24 percent; by year-end Harken was trading at $1.25.

When Bush's stock dumping was first reported by the *Houston Post* in October 1990, there were no accusations of insider trading. Then in April 1991 the *Wall Street Journal* revealed that the Securities and Exchange Commission had not been notified of his timely trade until eight months after the legal deadline. The regulatory agency commenced an investigation that concluded in 1991 with no action against George W. It was hardly a surprise. The SEC chairman at the time, Richard Breeden, was an especially ardent Bush loyalist, and the agency's general counsel was the same Texas attorney who had handled the sale of the Rangers baseball team for George W. and his partners in 1989. Breeden has insisted that he didn't know about the firm's mounting losses and that his stock sell-off had been approved by Harken's outside counsel.

Although no wrongdoing was proved, the suspicions surrounding Harken Energy and other business enterprises associated with the president's sons, particularly Neil Bush's directorship of a crooked Colorado savings and loan, caused the family severe embarrassment during the 1992 election. George W. described the twelve months he spent on the futile Bush-Quayle reelection effort as "the most miserable year of my life."

> ONCE MORE THE BUSH NAME SEEMED TO PROVIDE SUDDEN DELIVERANCE—THIS TIME FROM THE EMIRATE OF BAHRAIN

But that unhappy interlude scarcely stalled his own quest for success. Soon after buying the Rangers, he and his partners realized that the franchise would never make money unless they replaced the team's old ballpark, badly outmoded in an era of luxury skyboxes. With the backing of billionaire Rainwater they could have built a new stadium themselves, of course, but that would have violated an important tenet of major league economics. The construction costs of new sporting facilities are provided by taxpayers, not club owners. But because few municipalities accept such fiscal burdens without coercion, Rangers management began to hint unsubtly that unless the city government of Arlington provided land and financing on favorable terms, they would have to move the team to nearby Dallas or Fort Worth.

Major league baseball's negotiating advantage almost invariably leads to "public-private" deals, in which public funds subsidize private profit with the justification that the presence of the team will stimulate wider economic activity. Even by those standards, however, the capitulation of Arlington mayor Richard Greene was uniquely abject. In October 1990, Mayor Greene signed a contract that guaranteed $135 million toward the stadium's estimated price of $191 million. The Rangers put up $55 million to finance their share through a ticket surcharge. From the team's operating revenues, the city would earn a maximum of $5 million annually in rent, no matter how much the Rangers reaped from ticket sales and television (sum that exceeds $120 million a year). The most remarkable provision, however, permitted the franchise to buy the stadium after the accumulated rental payments reached a mere $75 million. The practical

acquired so cheaply by the Rangers included not just a fancy new stadium with a seating capacity of 49,292 but an additional 270 acres of suddenly valuable land.

The scheme predictably generated local opposition to "corporate welfare." But together with Mayor Greene, George W. convinced an overwhelming majority of Arlington voters to approve a sales tax hike that would back the stadium bonds in January 1991. The referendum must have left an impression on Governor Ann Richards, who quickly signed legislation creating the Arlington Sports Facilities Development Authority—with power to issue bonds and exercise eminent domain over any obstinate landowners.

Never before had a municipal authority in Texas been given license to seize the property of a private citizen for the benefit of other private citizens. That is exactly what happened to a recalcitrant Arlington family that refused to sell a 13-acre parcel near the stadium site for half its appraised value. Their land was condemned and handed over to the Rangers. The ensuing lawsuit revealed that well before any of the enabling legislation had passed, the Rangers management had planned to wield condemnation as a weapon to drive down the price, and an outraged jury awarded more than $4 million to the Arlington family whose land had been expropriated.

ALTHOUGH NEITHER BUSH NOR HICKS KNEW IT THEN, EACH WOULD CONSIDERABLY ENHANCE THE OTHER'S FORTUNE

Long before that verdict came down, however, the shiny new structure George W. had christened The Ballpark in Arlington was finished. It may have been no accident that the arena's outer walls were clad in reddish brick and pink granite that subtly echoed the appearance of the beautiful old state capitol in Austin. On November 8, 1993, with the stadium being readied to open the following spring, Bush announced that he would be running for governor. He didn't blush when he proclaimed that his campaign theme would demand self-reliance and personal responsibility rather than dependence on government.

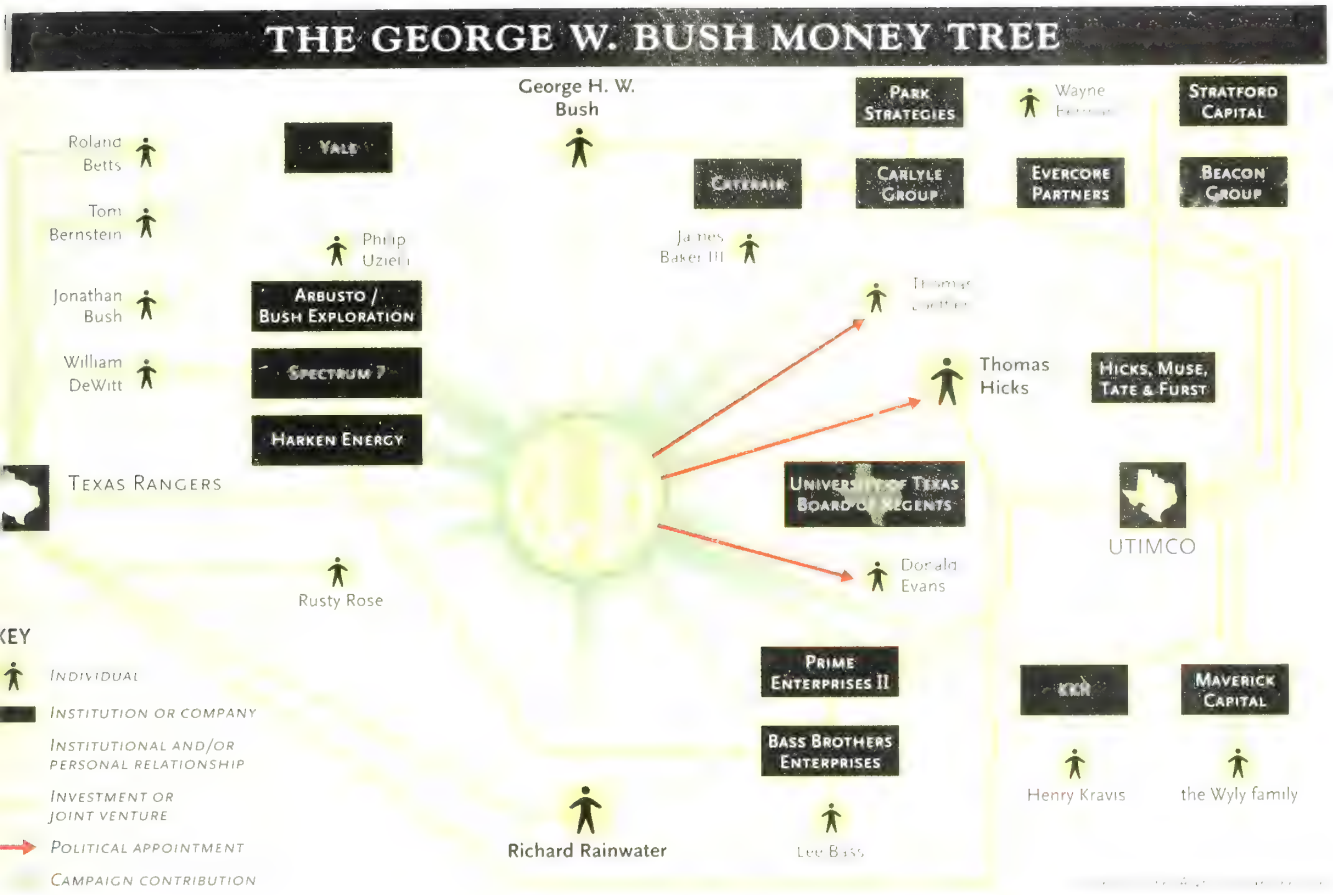
The Connections

When George W. was elected governor in November 1994, defeating Ann Richards by 53 to 46 percent, he at last came into possession of power that was not a mere reflection of his father's prominence. With more dollars at state government's disposal, his ability to reward those who helped him financially or politically became far greater than it had ever been before.

How he has used that power has received almost no attention from the national press. Washington journalists, after all, are unlikely to know much about the bureaucratic and political structures of Texas government. A few have discerned certain connections between Bush's views on environmental protection or health care and the desires of his most generous corporate contributors. But the continuous intertwining of Bush's personal financial interests with those of his partners and supporters—and the ways in which those mutual interests have been advanced by appointments he has made and legislation he has promoted—has been carefully examined only by a few reporters in Austin.

On December 6, 1994, one month after he defeated Ann Richards to become governor of Texas, George W. received a large but belated campaign contribution from an acquaintance named Thomas O. Hicks, whose support Bush had unsuccessfully solicited at the beginning of his campaign. Although neither man knew it then, each would considerably enhance the other's fortune. The tall, stocky Hicks, usually dressed in the expensive suits and handmade cowboy boots that signify success in Dallas, hardly looked different from dozens of Texas businessmen who supported Bush. Like many of them, he was a self-made multimillionaire with an interest in college football and quail hunting, a graduate of the University of Texas, and, like Bush, a former fraternity president. By 1994 Hicks had divorced and remarried a second, younger wife. Profiles in the business press often referred to his forceful and even "charismatic" personality.

It was a sign of Bush's new political maturity that he accepted the $25,000 check from Hicks, who earlier that same year had made the once unpardonable error of donating $25,000 to Richards. Not so long before, the younger George W. hadn't been quite so forgiving toward opportunists who supported both the Bushes and their Democratic opponents. Presumably the governor-elect understood that Hicks had merely done what was expected of any gubernatorial appointee. The previous January, in a gesture to the Texas business community, Richards had named Hicks to the University of Texas Board of Regents. Because the legislature convenes in Austin only every other year, however, his appointment had not yet been confirmed by the State Senate when she lost to Bush. He was therefore vulnerable to the new governor, who could have chosen to withdraw Hicks's name before the legislature opened for business in January 1995.



That wouldn't have been a very prudent decision, though, because Tom Hicks wasn't just any rich guy looking for a favor. Hicks was easily one of the wealthiest men in Texas, and, more specifically, he was the chief executive of Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst, an investment partnership he founded ten years ago that is now among the largest in the country. Its voracious acquisitions of radio and television stations, food and beverage companies, and a wide variety of other media and industrial properties had made Hicks not only a multimillionaire but an important player in the leveraged-buyout game. He was not someone to be snubbed by an ambitious politician. So Bush amiably pocketed Hicks's $25,000 check and, instead of scratching off his name, kept Hicks on the lengthy roster of appointees to be sent up to the capitol after his inauguration—a list the State Senate quickly rubber-stamped.

Of the scores of appointments made by an otherwise weak governor under the Texas constitution, a seat on the University of Texas Board of Regents is among the most desirable. It carries significant prestige, opportunities for patronage, and preferred access to coveted season tickets (or luxury boxes) at Longhorn football games. For someone like Tom Hicks, however, being a regent provided something far more valuable than any such trifling tokens of status. The prolific Hicks had conceived an ambitious plan for the state university system's financial assets—more than $15 billion—that matched his own bold investment style, and, with the governor's support, he parlayed his appointment into a position of unprecedented control over the university funds. There was nothing illegal about any of this—but much that is instructive about how things are done at the commanding heights of the American political economy.

Among the largest sources of capital available to players in the private-equity sweepstakes are public pension funds and university endowments (as George W. Bush later could easily have noticed during the 1980s, when the Harvard Management Company sank millions into Harken Energy's limited partnerships). While considerably more dangerous than ordinary stocks or mutual funds, these so-called alternative equity placements often promise much higher long-run returns. The University of Texas had been a [illegible] private equity [illegible]



losses had to be offset by higher risk, higher return equities. The regents agreed to an ambitious new plan to commit an additional $1 billion to private equity investments rather than ordinary stocks, bonds, and mutual or index funds. The regents also brought in a Massachusetts consulting firm to recommend improvements in U.T. investment procedures. In 1995, following the consultants' report, they adopted a rather radical innovation favored by Hicks and the professional staff. The plan featured a buzzword with great appeal to conservative Republicans such as the new governor: privatization. To compete more effectively in global markets, the university could "privatize" approximately $9 billion in financial assets by transferring all of its diverse holdings into a new nonprofit corporation. This entity, separate from the regents but still under their purview, was to be known as the University of Texas Investment Management Company, or UTIMCO.

Determined to secure passage of this far-reaching plan, Thomas Hicks met with Bush, Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock, and legislative leaders. "I paid for a separate lobbyist to make sure that it was done, too," Hicks boasted last December. It was one of the most significant changes to the governance of Texas made during Bush's tenure in the statehouse, and among the first important bills that he signed. With Bush's support and the sponsorship of legislators associated with the governor, the UTIMCO bill passed through the capitol in 1995 with very few questions asked.

The UTIMCO plan pleased the university's professional investment staff because it smoothed the way for higher salaries, closer to the large sums earned by money managers in the private sector. It seemed to offer a more corporate, streamlined, and less cumbersome approach to investing than the old system of regents' committees. And privatization would provide the confidentiality required to do deals with venture capitalists and limited partnerships.

What nobody in Austin seemed to realize when Bush signed the UTIMCO bill was that unlike the Board of Regents, this new outfit would not be subject to state laws that mandate open meetings and public records. The regents had always taken advantage of loopholes in those laws to hold their financial decisions behind a veil of privacy, but UTIMCO would be exempt from public scrutiny. The privatized corporation and its board would not even be listed in the official Texas State Directory. Nor would the non-regent appointees to the nine-member UTIMCO board be required to file personal financial disclosure documents like other appointees to state commissions and agencies.

In matters to protect, UTIMCO had been empowered to write its own rules, which stated from the time. After UTIMCO officially took over from the regents' investment committee in early 1996, with Hicks as its first chairman, all of its business was done behind closed doors. The directors gathered for their monthly board meetings at the Lyndon B. Johnson Museum, Lady Bird Johnson's hometown hall, rather than at UTIMCO's own more modest quarters in an Austin building named for Lady Bird Johnson. "It was a hell of a lot more convenient for all of us to meet there," Hicks noted. Largely freed from public accountability, UTIMCO soon embarked on a series of deals that raised serious questions about conflict of interest and political favoritism. Again, there was nothing unlawful about these decisions, all of which were vetted by the powerhouse law firm of Vinson & Elkins; they merely reflected the way business often is done behind closed doors—even, or especially, when the public's money is at stake. Friends and longtime associates of Thomas Hicks, and his firm's past and future business partners as well as major Republican contributors and political supporters of the Bush family, received hundreds of millions of dollars from the University of Texas investment fund.

> IN A CERTAIN SENSE, ALL THIS APPARENT FAVORITISM BY UTIMCO WAS MERELY BUSINESS AS USUAL.

In a certain sense, all this apparent favoritism was merely business as usual. It was and is, as they say, the corporate culture of the financial industry. The industry's corruptive influence on public pension funds has been a perennial scandal in state capitals across the country for well over a decade. Investment firms whose executives and lobbyists contribute generously to certain elected officials routinely have been rewarded with profitable contracts. In New York City, the current state comptroller, a Democrat, and his Republican predecessor were placed by several state pension major contributors with pension fund investment funds. In California, similar scandals erupted last year over the investment of public employee retirement funds. Last December the former state treasurer pleaded guilty to racketeering and money laundering in a wide-ranging probe of what federal authorities have called "the most widespread bribes, kickbacks, and improper campaign contributions" connected with more than $100 million in state pension fund investments.

Scrupulously ignoring the documented relationships between respectable financial firms and their political benefactors that by 1999 the Securities and Exchange Commission proposed to bar bankers and brokers from collecting fees from state financial clients for two years after making contributions "to an official of the government entity." The new rules, however, would not have prevented Hicks from enriching George W.'s supporters.

But the University of Texas presented a special case because, unlike most public pension or university funds, the UTIMCO board was chaired by a powerful private investor who was making deals for his own firm at a frantic pace while simultaneously overseeing the investment of public money, often with his firm's putative competitors. It was an arrangement that existed nowhere else in the country, and it provided Tom Hicks with some remarkable advantages.

Nothing could have been more useful to the chairman of Hicks, Muse than continuous access to confidential information concerning the other buyout firms, partnerships, and companies that approached UTIMCO seeking money. The otherwise unavailable details of who was involved in which deals and on what financial terms were provided to him routinely. And with that knowledge came the authority to award hundreds of millions in financing. His real constraint on his power was the presence of the governor's other appointees to the Board of Regents. He had little reason to worry about them, however. Under his chairmanship at UTIMCO nearly every vote on policy and asset management carried unanimously and rarely was any dissent heard. He also had [illegible] over the senior staff that formally recommended investments to the board because, as chair of the board's compensation committee, he helped [illegible] their annual bonuses of hundreds of thousands of dollars when they became employees of UTIMCO.

[illegible] and a year later on the UTIMCO board—was Tom Loeffler, a San Antonio lawyer and former [illegible] who spent much of his time in Washington as a registered lobbyist for Hicks, Muse, among other clients. (His firm [illegible] the Dallas investment company.) Loeffler has [illegible] substantial donor to the party and its candidates. [illegible] contributed more than $100,000 to George W. [illegible] 1994.

Also named as a regent by Bush was perhaps his closest friend from Midland, Texas—oil company executive Donald L. Evans. A comparatively small but faithful donor to Republican candidates himself, Evans has raised money for all of George W.'s political campaigns, beginning with the fledgling oilman's unsuccessful congressional race in 1978.

In fact, all of Bush's regent appointees were contributors to his own campaign and to the Republican Party. But giving lavishly to the governor and his party was a habit that Tom Hicks and his associates adopted rather suddenly themselves shortly after George W.'s election victory. Until then, as measured by his checkbook, Hicks's political sympathies had been bipartisan and even mildly Democratic, but after that initial $25,000 contribution to George W. in December 1994, Hicks and his brother, Steven (who runs CapStar Broadcasting for Hicks, Muse), eventually gave another $146,000 to the governor's election war chests. His partners have donated tens of thousands more. Together they are among the highest donors to George W. Bush since 1995.

During the same period, the Hicks, Muse firm has given $180,000 in soft money donations to Republican committees, while Hicks and his wife, Cinda, have given about $90,000 to various GOP candidates and committees in Texas and elsewhere. Contributions to the Republicans from him, his partners, his lobbyists, and his relatives total well over half a million dollars since his confirmation as regent.

Even before UTIMCO officially opened for business, the newly aggressive investment policy spearheaded by Tom Hicks took effect. Within the first few months of Bush's inauguration in January 1995, the University of Texas commenced an ambitious schedule of private investment deals that dwarfed those made the year before. In all of 1994, the university had placed a total of $36 million in three limited partnerships; in February 1995 alone, it invested almost twice that amount. The regents' financial plan restricted new private equity commitments for 1995–96 to $144 million, or one fourth of the funded portfolio for the fiscal year. Yet according to a review by the Texas state auditor's office, the actual commitments made in 1995–96 nearly doubled that amount, reaching $285 million.

On what basis did Hicks and his fellow board members direct those rapidly increasing flows of money? No one outside UTIMCO really knows, because until the summer of 1999 they kept their deliberations secret. The "due diligence" reports prepared by UTIMCO employees to evaluate potential investments have never been available to the press and public, and the board meetings were closed until last fall. This obsession with secrecy mir-

rotted the investment industry, in which the names of limited partners and their financial agreements are traditionally kept confidential and are often hidden behind generic corporate names and opaque offshore registrations. Until very recently, the citizens of Texas had no way to ascertain precisely where their largest public university's money had been invested and with whom. Even though considerably more information about UTIMCO's investments is now available, the identities of its limited partners remain hidden without an exhaustive search of SEC filings—and sometimes are impossible to discover even then. Remarkable as this arrangement might seem, it was perfectly lawful according to the Texas attorney general.

With most of those transactions and partnerships safely concealed behind thick corporate veils, it was not easy to discover that the regents—and a bit later, the directors of UTIMCO—were tunneling millions of dollars from the university endowments to the friends and business associates of Thomas Hicks, and also to major Republican contributors (who were sometimes the same people). But gradually, under pressure from a few newspapers, public-interest organizations, and legislators, a smattering of names and figures were pried out of the UTIMCO files. The most persistent digging was undertaken by R. G. Ratcliffe of the *Houston Chronicle*; the task of forcing open UTIMCO's meetings was shouldered largely by Suzy Woodford, the executive director of Common Cause Texas, and State Representative Sylvester Turner, a Houston Democrat. And from that piecemeal information, a familiar pattern began to emerge.

Under the guidance of Tom Hicks, a growing portion of the university's investment choices had a decidedly Republican tinge. On March 1, 1995, the regents voted to place what would prove to be a comparatively modest $10 million with The Carlyle Group, a Washington-based merchant bank that is chaired by Frank Carlucci, the former secretary of defense in the Reagan Administration. The specific fund was Carlyle Partners II, described with exquisite delicacy on the firm's Web site as pursuing "an investment strategy focused upon the intersection of government and business." Among Carlyle's partners are numerous former Reagan and Bush administration figures, including Richard Darman, economic adviser to President Bush, and James Baker III, the polished former White House chief of staff, secretary of state, and Bush-Quayle campaign chairman.

That a firm run by his father's associates would be awarded an investment contract only

SINCE LEAVING THE WHITE HOUSE, FORMER PRESIDENT BUSH HAS BEEN PAID BY A MERCHANT BANK THAT ALSO RECEIVED TEXAS FUNDS

week after George W. had either won or lost [illegible] Party [illegible] was [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] that dated back [illegible] Among [illegible] obscure [illegible] the [illegible] largest [illegible] catering services, which [illegible] quired by Carlyle in 1989. The next year, a seat on the company's board was arranged for George W. by the former [illegible] Nixon White House aide and longtime Bush associate Fred Malek, who was then an adviser at Carlyle. Although Bush remained on the catering company's board until 1994, his earnings as a Caterair director are not specified on his personal financial forms filed with the Texas Ethics Commission.

These days it is the governor's father who benefits from the Washington investment firm's largesse. Since leaving the White House, George Herbert Walker Bush has been paid by Carlyle for speeches at events sponsored by the merchant bank. His spokesman, Michael Dannenhauer, was uncertain when, exactly, the speechmaking arrangement began. Dannenhauer declined to provide any further details. "We don't talk about his earnings or his investments or anything like that." Carlyle's spokesman did not return calls seeking information about the firm's relationship with the Bushes. It is known, however, that the ex-president joined up with Baker, Carlucci, and Darman on a more formal basis in early 1998 when he became a "senior adviser" to Carlyle Asia Partners (a fund set up to buy distressed businesses in the Far East). His speaking and consulting fees are reportedly reinvested with Carlyle, and [illegible] close to the firm says that Bush Senior also has enjoyed a "carried interest" in one or more Carlyle partnerships—meaning that he was awarded a share of profits without putting up any of his own funds. Over the past two years, he has delivered speeches in Asia, where he remains popular among politicians and government officials and where he was invited to [illegible] executives of Carlyle Asia.

This extraordinary circumstance underscores the question of probity that haunts the career of George W. Bush: his political appointee oversaw the awarding of $10 million in public investment funds to a company that not only had maintained a long-term business relationship with Bush but later employed and compensated Bush's father [illegible]

Tom Hicks said that he did not know of the connection between George Bush and Carlyle when the March 1995 investment was approved. "I knew Jim Baker was involved with them," he recalled. But, Hicks added, he had informally recommended against investing with Carlyle, although he couldn't remember whether he had voted against the deal. "I had hired two former Carlyle employees and I had membership there, so issues within that organization."

In the following year, 1996, after UTIMCO took over the university's financial portfolio, its directors made an investment of $50 million in the $1.1 billion Kohlberg Kravis Roberts new buyout partnership set up by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts. That firm's founding partners are Henry Kravis, the mighty leveraged buyout corporate raider who has consistently been among the largest Republican contributors in the country during the past decade. Kravis was a financial co-chairman of Bush's 1992 campaign, and he boasted to reporters that he was a personal friend and confidant of President Bush. Both he and his wife, Marie Josée, attended the President's inaugural. In 1992 alone, Kravis gave $125,000 to the Republican National Committee.

THE MANY DEALS SUGGEST A REPUBLICAN VERSION OF THE LINCOLN BEDROOM SLEEPOVERS IN THE CLINTON WHITE HOUSE

As Republican donors, the Bass clan in Fort Worth may not quite match Kravis and his partners in its generosity. The oil-rich Basses are also old friends of the Bushes, enjoying a particularly close connection to George W. through Richard Rainwater, the billionaire financier behind the Texas Rangers deal, and through Harvard Business School, which remembered Bass Enterprises when it came time to establish a deal in Bahrain. In April 1998, UTIMCO invested $20 million in a deal involving Bass Brothers Enterprises. The limited partnership

Later in 1998 UTIMCO placed the unusually large sum of $96 million with Maverick Capital, a relatively new partnership in Dallas. Among Maverick Capital's main investors and general partners are the Wyly family, the principal stockholders in Sterling Software and, again, long-time friends of the Bushes. Between 1993 and 1998, various Wyly family members gave well over $300,000 to Republican candidates and committees.

The making of so many deals suggests a Republican version of the Lincoln Bedroom sleepovers at the Clinton White House. Henry Kravis and his partner George Roberts; Robert Bass, his wife, Anne, and his brother Lee Bass; and the brothers Sam and Charles Wyly all were members of "Team 100," the elite corps of wealthy Bush backers who each gave at least $100,000 to the GOP in 1988 and 1992 and who in turn were provided special access to the president, the White House, and Cabinet members. Among several national co-chairs of Team 100 was Tom Loeffler, who as a Texas regent and UTIMCO board member later voted on all of the deals involving the Basses, the Wylys, and Kravis.

UTIMCO, for its part, maintains that it "does not consider or inquire into the political affiliations of prospective managers or company management: because such matters are not factors in the due diligence process. In fact, management rarely has any knowledge of political connections of the principals involved in a private investment."

While the University of Texas invested hundreds of millions of dollars with Republican-linked partnerships under the guidance of Tom Hicks, it also placed hundreds of millions more with his friends and associates as well as with firms that did business with Hicks, Muse. Although Hicks recused himself from voting on several of those deals, the minutes of the UTIMCO board meetings [illegible] that he actually left a meeting in which his interests were potentially implicated.

The well-connected Texas law firm of Vinson & Elkins, which advised the regents and UTIMCO on financial and ethical issues, has never found that Hicks misused his position. Yet there was certainly a pattern of remarkable coincidences between Hicks's own interests and large investments of university funds. The $50 million UTIMCO investment in the Kohlberg Kravis Roberts 1996 Fund was followed fifteen months later by the commitment of an unprecedented joint venture between the Kravis firm and Hicks, Muse. The two investment groups, morally perceived as business rivals, had quietly put together a $1.5 billion takeover bid

for the Regal Cinemas theater chain. KKR's share of the partnership came from the same KKR fund in which UTIMCO had recently invested. The UTIMCO attorneys decided there was no conflict, however, because Hicks had voted for the KKR deal before the joint venture was put together. "I had mixed feelings about it," Hicks said, noting that KKR is, after all, his own firm's largest competitor. "That's not a conflict, that's a gentlemanly gesture."

In another 1996 decision Hicks actually insisted on increasing UTIMCO's financial commitment to a company in which he would soon have an indirect but substantial interest. On June 10 the UTIMCO board met at the Hicks, Muse offices in Dallas with principals of the Beacon Group, a New York investment company that was then seeking investors for its newest partnership, known as the Focus Value Fund. After the Beacon Group presentation, the UTIMCO staff recommended that the university commit $15 million to the Focus Value Fund. According to the board minutes, Hicks then demanded to know why the recommendation was so small, and "added that . . . a $25 million commitment would be more appropriate." The board unanimously agreed to increase the investment with Beacon.

A few months later Stratford Capital Partners—a company controlled by Hicks, Muse, with Hicks as a board member—announced that it would buy Hollywood Theaters, another moviehouse chain, in a $52 million deal with the Beacon Group. But before Beacon received actual funding for this deal from UTIMCO, the UTIMCO staff discovered the apparent conflict of interest with Stratford. As Hicks saw it, "The system worked. The staff saw the potential conflict, and they instructed Beacon that [UTIMCO] needed to opt out of that investment." The Hollywood Theaters deal went forward and closed in October.

Apparently, other seeming conflicts of interest were deemed moot by UTIMCO's attorneys if a period of several months elapsed between an investment by UTIMCO and a Hicks, Muse deal involving the same company—or vice versa. On January 27, 1997, the university placed $40 million with a New York investment bank called Evercore Partners Inc. (one of whose principals [illegible] Roger Altman). Hicks, Muse [illegible] Evercore [illegible] $[illegible] million takeover [illegible] Hicks, Muse.



FORMER PRESIDENT BUSH (ACKNOWLEDGING APPLAUSE) AND GEORGE W. AT TEXAS RANGERS GAME IN 1994

A strikingly similar series of events—except in reverse—also dates back to January 1997. That was when Hicks, Muse and its Capstar Broadcasting subsidiary announced the purchase of eleven radio stations from American Securities Partners for an undisclosed amount. Trade publications reported that "the transaction is expected to [illegible] by the fourth quarter of 1997." Several months later, on May 22, 1998, the UTIMCO board invested $30 million with American Securities Partners.

Two former classmates of Hicks' at the University of Texas also were awarded large investments by UTIMCO. One was [illegible] fraternity brother Bruce Schmitzer, a New York insurance man who set up W'and Partners, which received more than $62 million in at least three separate deals with UTIMCO between 1996 and 1998. Schmitzer's record of success was mixed at best; his companies' rates of return lagged behind the [illegible] assuming that he had [illegible] president of Marsh & McLennan, then the world's largest insurance brokerage, after the company [illegible] $[illegible] million in [illegible] trading and was fined by the New York State insurance department.

Despite [illegible] Hicks remained close friends with Richard Rainwater and the Ba

himself with the utmost integrity.

Hicks ended with a period of frenetic growth for his investment firm, and with that growth came expanding ambitions. Although he continued to pursue all sorts of deals, Hicks de- [illegible] outfit known as Inverness Management. In De- [illegible] 1997, Dunwoody's venture received a [illegible] commitment of $40 million. According to [illegible] attended The University of Texas... [illegible] pointee Tom Hicks was doing with the Permanent University Fund? The Texas govern- [illegible] maintained a discreet silence about the [illegible] controversial investment policies [illegible] the original privatization bill. [illegible] feather my nest or feather my friends' nest," [illegible] my friends is simply not true." [illegible] much Bush knew about UTIMCO [illegible] best friend and trusted adviser [illegible] Lehman, and was privy to UTIMCO's activities from the very beginning.

In the meantime, Tom Hicks's approach to [illegible] intense scrutiny not in Texas but in California. CalPERS, the state's employee pension fund, [illegible] outside consultant, Christopher J. Bower. A [illegible]

One of the minority owners of the Mavericks happened to be Richard Rainwater, George W.'s main partner in the Texas Rangers baseball franchise. Under a contract with Perot Jr., Rainwater's Crescent Real Estate Equities Company would earn a $10 million special commission af- [illegible] teams. Just as the Rangers' baseball park in Ar- [illegible] lic funds, the owners of the Dallas teams expected local taxpayers to put up most of the money for their showplace. In June 1997 Bush promoted their plan by signing legislation that permitted Texas cities to impose new taxes for the financing of sports facilities. Within months, the citizens of Dallas approved construction of a $230 million hockey and basketball arena.

That deal increased the value of Hicks's hockey team and certainly profited Richard Rainwater's real estate company. But it was Hicks's next acquisition that brought an enormous [illegible] Rainwater but for George W. Bush. Hicks [illegible] Rangers and [illegible]

When the Rangers deal was completed in 1998, Bush's fourth year in office, Hicks paid about $252 million for the team—more than three times the price paid by Bush and his partners in 1989. The other members of the Rangers partnership fattened Bush's payout six times over, by awarding him additional shares in the team at the [illegible] that brought his 1.8 percent share up to 12 percent. Without that extra

consideration, his investment would have earned far less. For Bush, the windfall must have been sweetened by a sense of vindication. This time, no one denied that George W.'s contributions to the Rangers had helped to build the franchise. As the team's charming promoter and front-office man, he had played a role in its success, especially in the stadium deal that increased both its revenues and the value of its real estate holdings. In the celebrations of the sale that appeared in newspapers and magazines, his role was universally praised. According to his partners, who notably included some of the richest businessmen in and beyond Texas, their generosity to George W. was motivated solely by fairness. They owed him not only for helping to organize the original Rangers deal but for doing his job as a general partner so admirably. What went unmentioned during the celebration of the governor's sudden good fortune were the public benefits conferred upon some of those same businessmen during Bush's tenure in the capitol. Hicks had enjoyed dominion over some $13 billion of the University of Texas investment portfolio, putting some $1.7 billion in private investments.

Another year would pass before UTIMCO would begin to draw criticism from Texas newspapers, public interest groups, and legislators. Growing concern about UTIMCO's secretive, high-risk strategies forced the board to disclose more information about its investments, including rates of loss and profit. This data is listed by UTIMCO under the heading of "IRR," meaning "internal rate of return," a measure whose accuracy is disputed by some financial analysts. In March 1998 *Forbes* magazine pointed out that "there is no standard way of calculating IRR, so returns are easily manipulated. . . . In just about every case, investors must rely on the general partner's say-so in valuing illiquid investments that are not publicly traded."

With that caveat in mind, it should be noted that Carlyle Partners is credited by UTIMCO with having an annual IRR of more than 40 percent. The Kohlberg Kravis Roberts fund did poorly, however, showing an IRR of only 12 percent since 1996, which is far lower than the Standard & Poor's Index. And Prime Enterprises II, the Bass-related fund, has shown a total loss of more than 40 percent on the money actually invested so far since 1998.

The investments placed with Tom Hicks's friends haven't performed well either. Bruce Schnitzer's Wand Equity Portfolio II shows a small loss since 1996, while his Wand Secondary Interests fund shows an IRR of about 9 percent since 1997, again well under the Standard & Poor's Index. Dunwoody's Inverness fund, [illegible] with a total [illegible] percent since 1997, the Beacon Group Equity Value Fund has likewise been a relative disappointment, more than 5 percent annually. Theoretically, some of these assets will move more rapidly in value and provide substantial returns, five or ten years after their initial losses. But the University of Texas experience with these "alternative equity" plays is not encouraging to date. The annual IRR from nearly $600 million worth of investments committed in 1995 and 1996 averages around 16 percent, nowhere near the gain recorded by the stock market during the same period.

> "ANY INSINUATIONS THAT I HAVE USED MY OFFICE TO HELP MY FRIENDS IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE," SAID GEORGE W. BUSH.

Perhaps not altogether coincidentally, Hicks quit the UTIMCO chairmanship after his term as regent expired last February, even though he had previously mentioned that he might stay on. He didn't seek reappointment. His lobbyist Tom Loeffler left the UTIMCO board around the same time, saying that he planned to focus on raising money for the Bush campaign.

When George W. Bush declared his candidacy for president in 1999, hundreds of his wealthiest supporters pledged to raise at least $100,000 each for his campaign. For a time their names were kept confidential, but eventually the Bush campaign—meaning finance chairman Donald Evans—released the names of the first 115 "Pioneers" to meet its fund-raising quota, even as hundreds more unnamed backers were reportedly trying to do so. Listed among the founding group of successful Pioneers were R. Steven Hicks, the brother of Tom Hicks, Tom Loeffler, three partners in Vinson & Elkins, the law firm that serves as counsel to UTIMCO, and former Texas Rangers partners Mercer Reynolds, William DeWitt, Rusty Rose, and Roland Betts. Also joining the Pioneers were Adele Hall, Charles Wyly, and Lee Bass, whose partnerships had received investments from UTIMCO; and Wayne Berman, the lobbyist and consultant who represents Carlyle Partners.

This vast agglomeration of monied influence is what has made George W. Bush both a rich man and a potential president. Knowing how he became what he is, it's difficult to imagine Bush clearing the cobwebs from the temple of democracy, as his advertising promises he will do. He professes a compassionate conservatism, but his true ideology, the record suggests, is crony capitalism. ■

II. THE PROSPECT OF A BUSH RESTORATION

By Kevin Phillips

unaccustomed starring role. By most indications,

barring the turnaround of likely Democra-

member of a different party. A Bush reinstatement after eight years could hard-

currently predict we will do, the American

ren had been tapping for years: a pop-

their daughters' coming-out parties, or teeing up

is an understandable reaction to recent cultural and political disillusionment. As dumb and off-putting as [illegible] Vice President Bush's [illegible] critics might have seemed a decade and seven years of watching the Bush Cassinos in the White House have transformed our collective memory of George Senior from yesterday's punch irrelevance into a model of dignity and gentlemanly behavior, a man who never should have been ejected in favor of an Arkansas governor

steadily during the last seven years from its low

now stands in the low to mid-70s, an extraordinary election-year gift for George W.

The essence of political restoration is neither republican nor monarchical. It depends upon the

to let its memory grow more and more clouded until it sees fit to reinstate something second-rate.

tain an element of farce. Both Charles I and Louis XVI, whose kingly failures began the two previ-



the senior Bush. And the interloper who came along to revolutionize their countries respective governments—Oliver Cromwell in the case of Richard ("Tumble-down Dick") in England in the 1650s, and Maximilien Robespierre and then Napoleon in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century France—also made themselves unwelcome, especially in the final days of their regimes. In both countries the political elites came to prefer the return of an inexperienced heir. Charles II was called back to England in 1660. Louis XVIII, to a reestablished throne in 1815.

The man who has provoked our own potential restoration, then, is obviously the first president to use the Oval Office as a connected home-based lair ized by a White House intern. Or to have his DNA tested for a connected paternity suit. Or to have his foreign policy both previewed and satirized in a Hollywood comedy. We are talking, William Jefferson Clinton, formerly known in Arkansas as just plain Bill.

Even though most Americans did not want Clinton impeached last winter, many began to express disdain for him as a person. Yet the massive

[illegible] Cabinet [illegible] the toilet. And then there was the black sheep brother, Sam Houston [illegible]. Oh, Boy Brothers, in fact have gotten [illegible] hallmark of late twentieth-century American White Houses. Then [illegible] Jimmy Carter's ne'er-do-well brother Billy [illegible] money from Libya and had a beer named after him: Billy Beer.

[illegible] Billy's brother, Roger, [illegible] time on a drug charge, and who [illegible] Neidermeyer Brother's time for his own spectacular [illegible] should have been signaled. But [illegible] Clinton's own [illegible] in the Oval Office [illegible] probably rung down the curtain on Democratic Buffoon acts forever, at least at the [illegible] level. He seems to have particularly infuriated three types of Americans: Christian Rightists and Catholics on moral or mock-moral grounds, and at a different level of class and caste disdain the mainstream upper-middle-class gentry, who would prefer that the world look like Farmington, Connecticut, and [illegible] the White House look and behave like George and Barbara Bush. These people, it stands to reason, are not only turning [illegible] Clinton but running to the opposite persona.

Bush the Younger is classic restoration material, [illegible] he is less requires his being a [illegible] White House talent. Not a few observers have described him as cocky, lazy, and arrogant (like Charles II), and intellectually undistinguished [illegible] Eisenhower). These comparisons [illegible] of course, but for the first time in U.S. history the qualifications of a front-runner for the presidency are converging with those of the Prince of Wales: heredity and [illegible].

All these sentiments—a longing for traditional values and elites, the tarnishing of an incumbent low-caste president, and the parallel [illegible] Americans' memories of the [illegible] Administration—converge to create the arithmetic now at [illegible] the point of [illegible] the only [illegible] that [illegible] placement [illegible] politics increasingly akin to that of Lilliput, where the emperor had only to be a nail's breadth [illegible] Bush's middle-of-the-road supporters don't care [illegible] the prime minister's [illegible] Jimmer table from the Queen of England, for [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN U.S. HISTORY, THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A FRONT RUNNER FOR THE PRESIDENCY ARE CONVERGING WITH THOSE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES: HEREDITY AND BIRTH

commonly reported home that they hadn't been able to believe they were speaking with the American secretary of the treasury. Brady was, however, a loyal friend who had given Bush a seat on the board of his family company, Purolator Courier, in 1976.

Rather surprising, given the drubbing George Senior took in 1992, is how quickly the Republican Party of the late 1990s has rallied back to the Bush standard. It all seems to have started after the '94 elections, when the Republicans captured Congress and strutted like peacocks instead of recognizing the anti-Clinton dynamic largely responsible for their victories. George W.'s win as governor of Texas, where Democrats had mistakenly dismissed him as "the shrub," was also seized upon as proof of the comeback. The Bush name was rebounding, and with it the Bush family legacy. Indeed, once Dole lost to Clinton in 1996, most of the Republicans pegged as possible 2000 nominees were members of George Senior's actual or political family: his vice president, Dan Quayle, his chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Colin Powell; his labor, education, and HUD secretaries Elizabeth Dole, Lamar Alexander, and Jack Kemp; and his son, the governor of Texas. Clearly, a broader rebound was taking shape well before the movement for a final Bush Restoration began in early 1999.

But it's George W. who has the "Big P" in his pocket—his father was the president. And this rules some of those whose genealogies aren't quite so impressive. Before Dan Quayle dropped out, his wife, Marilyn, told the *Arizona Republic* that George W. was "the guy that never accomplished anything, everything he got daddy took care of." And Alan Keyes, a candidate for the Republican nomination, clearly had Bush in mind during a debate last December when he spoke about those who owe their success to family connections.

Republican graybeards, in turn, remember that much the same thing was said about George Senior. He was the "résumé candidate" who got appointed to things. Or, in the words of Texas populist Jim Hightower, "He was born on third base and thinks he hit a triple." After World War II and Yale, when he went out to Texas, his family arranged his job, and his uncle on the Walker side got him the money to start his own company. He did win a traditionally Republican House seat, the argument goes, but that's it. He lost two Senate races. Then Nixon appointed him U.S. ambassador to the U.N. because he knew how to pluck a watercress sandwich from a silver platter. More appointments followed, as U.S. ambassador to China and director of the CIA. Finally, Ronald Reagan picked him as vice president.

The irony now, when similar populist complaints are being leveled at Bush's sons that the family's patrician image has been eroding for years. Of greater concern is the deterioration evident in the family's ethical code. It's true that both former president Bush's father and his grandfather were upright figures and highly successful investment bankers—the one a well-known sportsman for whom golf's Walker Cup is named, and the other a U.S. senator from Connecticut—and they seem to have possessed the high-minded character now reduced to the shop-window displays of Ralph Lauren's ersatz Old Money Green and Yacht Club White. But it is far from clear that we can say the same thing for the two Bush generations represented by the former president and the Texas governor. The chance that George W. will restore the decorum and probity of yesteryear bears comparison to the hope that Clinton will ignite a "Holding Out for Marriage" movement among the nation's teens.

A *New York Times* reporter, writing in April of 1992, infuriated the then-president's family by outlining the various margin-call business dealings entered into by the Bush males. Presidential brother Prescott had been an adviser to a Tokyo investment firm identified by Japanese police as a front for the Yakuza. George W. flirted with an SEC insider-trading violation, and W.'s brother Neil was fined a relatively small amount for his conflict-of-interest involvement as a director of the failed Silverado Savings and Loan. The column also jabbed at W.'s brother Jeb, now governor of Florida, for his involvement in a loan default that contributed to the failure of a Florida S&L. This was the silver side of the Bad Brother coin, not to mention the Rose Garden. But a clear case of family efforts to profit from a close relationship with power.

Yet there is more to it than the Bush family's overall patrician image that helps to explain the popular assumption that George W. has foreign policy in his genes. It's as if this would be an unprecedented case in the governorship of Texas. He's sort of national and foreign issues only remotely felt in Austin, so the weightiest challenge

IF A BUSH RESTORATION IMPLODES ON ITS OWN COCKY INADEQUACY, THAT COULD BE A LAST HURRAH NOT SIMPLY FOR THE FAMILY BUT FOR THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

for his campaign. A Lone Star State governor has [illegible] intense study and the cultivation of personal grav- [illegible] observation that George W., at fifty-three, is essentially a perpetual adolescent, forever mugging for the cameras, making wisecracks, and "entertaining people with his impression of Dr. Evil, [illegible]

Some Republicans are indeed concerned that [illegible] alent of the Prince of Wales. But the current reverie for the Bush era has been gathering force for several years now, and it seemed to set in concrete during the summer and early autumn, [illegible] ing. The party bet may no longer be recallable.

The Republican Party, let us remember, is nominally decorous and eminently hierarchical. Adult [illegible] Speaker-designate Bob Livingston did last year; seniority and ancestry are next to godliness. Nom- [illegible] there has been a Bush or a Dole on every ticket [illegible] the party's predilection against [illegible] Texas governor's appeal [illegible] of the members were related to one another.

[illegible] political inbreeding is restricted to the Republican [illegible] as the death of a royal prince. Moreover, [illegible] nd urban development who has married a [illegible] brought a first: the wives of [illegible]

real American Restoration. Superficially, at least, [illegible] clover. They would have the Oval Office and probably keep Congress. But history practically shrieks a warning. If we can judge by the English and French examples, restoration governments ride into office on an arrogant, memory-driven dynastic [illegible] A restored Bush presidency would almost certainly revisit some of the lower points of 1988-92 (George H already trotted out "compassionate conservatism" as successor to his father's "kinder and gentler nation"). Both Bushes, father and son, have friends and connections among Middle East oil producers, Asian business leaders, and other frequently demanding interest groups, which heralds another round of family-interest international [illegible] family tree is so laden with investors and dealmakers that W., as president, would find himself bound to replay some version of his father's endless pleading for capital gains tax reductions.

When the restored James II fell in 1688, that was the end of the Stuart kings. When the restored Bourbons followed suit in 1830, that was the end of their house. Should a Bush Restoration implode on its own whir of cocky inadequacy, that could be a similar last hurrah not simply for the family's power but for the Republican Party. In addition to the obvious dangers of ineffectual domestic policy, the Bushes—father and son—precipitate major intraparty splits. It is almost impossible to imagine Buchanan, Ross Perot, jousting with Eisenhower, Nixon, or Reagan, but there is something about a Bush that brings it on. [illegible] Churchill, at a moment of candor, [illegible] Neville Chamberlain like W., the son of a famous political father—as someone who would have made a good lord mayor of Birmingham [illegible] and who in his service as prime minister from 1937 to 1940, Chamberlain's leadership was a disaster. We can fairly ask whether George W. Bush is anything more than another scion who has made a decent governor during a period of prosperity and easy growth, and whether the United States can afford nominees who are to [illegible] politics what legacies [illegible] require. And if you're a gambler, that's all there is to W., then why are the Republicans, and the United States, even messing around with him? ■

You deserve a factual look at...

The Arabs of Israel

Are they a "persecuted minority?"

The world is much focused on the developments in Judea, Samaria, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, where, for the most part, Israel has relinquished sovereignty and authority to the Palestinian Authority (P.A.). Ninety-eight percent of the Arabs in these territories live now under the rule of the P.A. There is some question whether or not they are better off than before. But there are many who believe that the Arabs in Israel itself are a "persecuted minority."

What are the facts?

Israel is a Democratic Country. Israel is an open, pluralistic, and egalitarian society. Different religions, cultures, and social traditions co-exist. Protection of such diversity is embedded in Israel's traditions and confirmed by the government. About 20% of the population, over one million people, are non-Jews, most of them Arabs, and some Druze. Like all other Israeli citizens, they have full rights to vote and to hold elective office. Both Arabs and Druze hold seats in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. Every Knesset, since the founding of the State in 1948, has had Arab and Druze members. All transactions in the Knesset are simultaneously translated into Arabic, and Arab members may address the Knesset in Arabic.

> "Contrary to propaganda...the Arabs in Israel enjoy every civil right and have the same status under law as Jewish Israelis"

It is official policy of the Israeli government to foster the language, culture, and traditions of the Arab minority in the educational system and in daily life. Arabic is an official language in Israel, together with Hebrew. Israeli Arabs, press the most vibrant and independent of any country in the region. There are more than 20 Arabic periodicals. They publish what they please, subject only to the same military censorship as Jewish publications. There are daily TV and radio programs in Arabic. Arabic is taught in Jewish secondary schools. Israeli universities are renowned centers of learning in the history and literature of the Arabs, Middle East.

Education and literacy of the Arab population in Israel is as high as and probably higher than in any Arab country. The literacy rate among Israeli Arabs is 92%, certainly the same as for Israeli Jews. There are close to 1,000 Arab educational institutions in Israel, with about 300,000 students—just about 25 times as many as in 1948, when the State of Israel was created. Ninety percent of Arab children attend school, probably

Israeli Arabs Enjoy Full Equality in Law and in Fact. All religious communities in Israel enjoy the full protection of the State. Israeli Arabs, [illegible] are free to practice their faith, observe their own weekly day of rest and holidays, and to administer their own internal affairs. Each community has its own religious councils and courts, and has full jurisdiction over religious affairs, including matters of personal status, such as marriage and divorce. [illegible]

In contrast to the non-Israeli Arab countries, Arab women in Israel enjoy the same rights as men. Israeli Arab women can, for example, hold elective office, vote, and be elected to parliament. Israeli law prohibits polygamy, child marriage, and the subjugation of women. Israeli Arabs are free to [illegible] country in the region. Israeli health standards are by far the highest in the Middle East. Israeli health institutions are freely open to all Arabs, on the same basis as they are to Jews.

[illegible] Arab and Druze citizens of Israel are required to do military service, as Jewish citizens are required to do. Every citizen, Jew or Arab, over the age of 18, is conscripted into the armed forces. In fact, Israeli Arabs are not required to perform any military service at all. Since the surrounding Arab states, with the exceptions of Egypt and recently of Jordan, are the avowed enemies of Israel and are dedicated to its destruction, this exemption is granted by the Israeli government to its Arab citizens, so as to spare them conflicts of loyalty and conscience.

Contrary to propaganda and to what many believe, the Arabs in Israel are full-fledged citizens, enjoy every civil right, and have the same status in law as Jewish Israelis. In contrast, the Jews [illegible] Arabs in the Middle East. It is instructive and sobering to compare the conditions of the [illegible] Arab countries, those of the putrid remnants of Jewry in Arab countries. Jews have been [illegible] Under Arab dominance they were always third class citizens and subject to harassment [illegible] Jews in Arab countries in 1940, now there are fewer than 25,000. But there [illegible] and 150,000 in 1948, an almost seven-fold increase. There [illegible] Arabs in Israel

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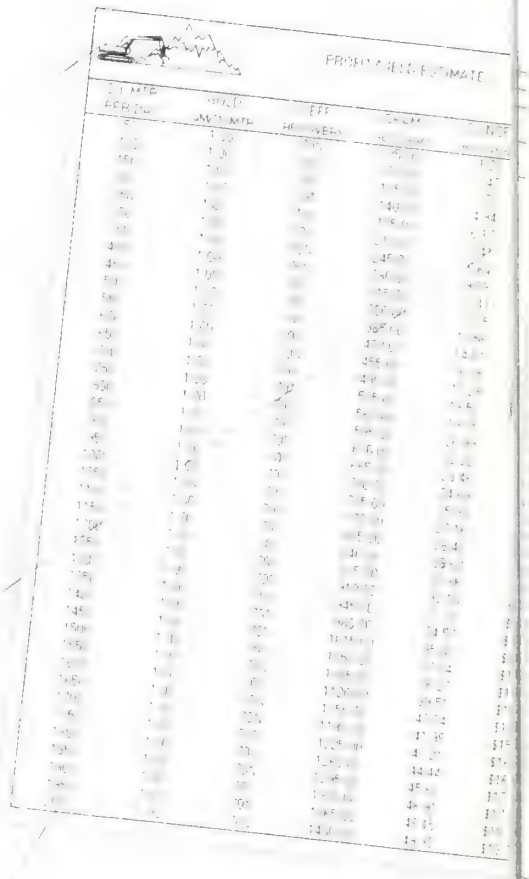
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GUERRILL

A gringo's guide to doing bu

Ever since the Spanish conquest of the 1500s, enterprising foreigners have come to Colombia's jungle with dreams of plundering its riches. Today's conquistadors arrive as businessmen, armed with laptops and cell phones and schemes that, at least on paper, appear sound. But the numbers can be deceiving. This spreadsheet, created by a benefit analyst speculating a gold mine in Colombia, was used by a tiny American start-up called Lenco to raise $3 million in venture capital in 1995. Lenco planned to exploit three open-pit mining concessions in the densely foliated province of Nariño, in territory without paved roads or phone lines, controlled by guerrillas and drug barons. Lenco's president, a former stockbroker, had virtually no experience in mining. Neither did many of Lenco's other officers. What they did have was this reassuring logo, depicting a backhoe handily dispatching a mountain, and a geological survey indicating that their concessions may have contained some $40 million worth of gold. In less than three years, they lost everything. What can other gringo businessmen learn from their mistakes?

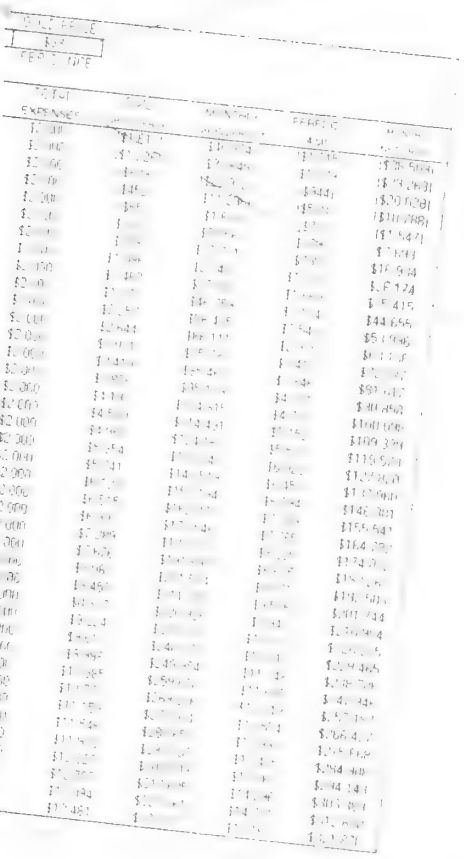


Security systems. "Vaccines" are a necessary part of doing business in Colombia. Right-wing paramilitaries charge them, drug cartels charge them, corrupt government officials charge them. But the nominally Marxist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) do business the Colombian way better than anyone, earning an estimated $1 billion annually largely by collecting protection fees from drug cartels and other businesses operating in the 15 million acres of territory the guerrillas control. FARC waited a year for Lenco to set up its mine and develop a cash flow. Then, in January 1997, they asked for a meeting to discuss the payment of a "royalty." Their fee: $4,000 a month. Already paying a 17.5 percent royalty to the mine's original owner, Lenco refused. Three weeks later, 35 armed guerrillas looted the mine for valuables, kidnapped two managers, and demanded a $1.5 million ransom.

Next production goals. Lenco knew that to maximize profits it had to maximize productivity. In other words, it had to strip-mine voraciously. In 1995 foreign-owned mines the world over were successfully exploiting business-friendly environmental and labor laws to extract vast quantities of gold from Third World soil. According to Lenco's geological surveys, its concessions contained, on average, one gram of gold per cubic meter of earth. By excavating 2,000 cubic meters a day and recovering 70 percent of each gram of gold, Lenco's accountants reckoned, the mine could strike a mother lode of profits. But the firm never came close to meeting its goals. At its peak a few weeks before the kidnapping, the mine was processing only 1,500 cubic meters of earth a day, recovering only a quarter gram of gold per cubic meter, and averaging $35,000 in losses a month.

APITALISM

Colombia, *by Daren Fonda*



Daren Fonda is a writer living in New York. This is his first piece for Harper's Magazine.

The market is a fickle fickle thing. For the purpose of this spreadsheet, Lenco estimated that gold would continue trading at its 1995 price—around $385 an ounce. But in 1997 the price of gold tumbled. Even if Lenco had met production goals, its concessions would have been worth $160 million less in 1999 than they were four years earlier. Ransom money, by comparison, has proved a far more stable commodity, making kidnapping a growth industry in Colombia. Of the 2,283 reported kidnappings committed there in the first nine months of 1999—by left-wing guerrillas, right-wing paramilitaries, drug gangs, and others—1,627 were financially motivated.

Because of hidden costs. Lenco's most valuable asset wasn't buried Colombian gold but cheap Colombian labor. Over 40 percent of Colombia's population subsists below the poverty line and 20 percent are unemployed. Rural areas like Narmo are so poor that many local farmers grow coca out of necessity, most legal crops rotting before they can be transported, by wagon or foot, to urban markets. Able to pay most of its workers less than $2 an hour (a good wage for the region but a third of what FARC reportedly pays its soldiers), Lenco estimated that it could keep costs down to as little as $2,000 a day. But the same lack of infrastructure that drives peasants to coca farming created unforeseen costs for Lenco. Plagued by equipment breakdowns, fuel shortages, and incompetent geological surveys, the company hired more and more workers, but cost overruns persisted and productivity continued to lag. FARC, meanwhile, has seen its ranks and revenues steadily multiply over the last five years.

Cut your losses. In the end, Lenco's dreams of hauling $321,870 in profits a month proved as chimerical as El Dorado, the legendary Amazonian kingdom of gold. After the raid by FARC, the firm finally collapsed, $1 million in debt. For the next eight months, the two kidnapped managers, American Frank Skee and Colombian Hernan Torres, lived as their captors did, marching through the lowlands and mountains by night, eating cornmeal *arepas*, sardines, and soup, and sleeping outdoors under mosquito netting in makeshift camps. Neither hostage was harmed. Later, after his release, Skee likened his trip through the jungle to ecotourism, an experience that under different circumstances "could probably be marketed." Eventually, North American miners based in Bogotá—who had a stake in Lenco and had dealt previously with kidnappers—succeeded in reducing FARC's ransom to $500,000. Skee's parents raised half the cash. Ross Perot loaned the rest. Upon Skee's release, FBI agents escorted him home to North Carolina, where he is still seeking to recover the year's worth of wages that he says Lenco never paid him. Meanwhile, back in the jungle, the guerrillas—in return for a royalty—turned Lenco's mine over to its workers, who operate it profitably to this day.

BACK IN THE U.S.S.R.?

Eight years after independence, Belarus ponders reunification

By Jeffrey Tayler

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airline) aboard a twin-prop Anto-
wobbly sixty-passenger
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The similarities between Belarus and Russia extend far beyond lin-
decades of shared Soviet history can explain. With the exception of a republic killed off by the Bolsheviks in its infancy, the territory of present-day Belarus had, until 1991, never supported an independent Belaru-
nged to the domain of the Eastern Slavs, pagan tribes of fur traders, farmers, and honey merchants who spoke Old Russian. In
nth century its princes fell un-
which Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians were to evolve.
hristianity from the Byzantine
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on Orthodox Christianity, language (Belarusian began evolving out o Old Russian), and folk culture. In the eighteenth century the Russian em pire took over Poland, violently sup planting Belarusian culture with its own in the process. It was thus natur al that Belarus, pacified and for the most part Russified, ended up a founding republic of the Soviet Union. Yet in 1991 Belarusian na tionalism helped sunder that union and Belarus became a sovereign state.

A longtime student of Soviet and Russian history, for the past seven years I have lived in Moscow and have followed recent events in Belarus with puzzlement. Since 1994 Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko has been pounding on the Kremlin gates demanding reunifi-
treaties, however vague, have been signed, with little substantial pr
viet legacy to Belarus
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Minsk differs from Moscow: streets
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Skaryny Avenue runs

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sia. Lukashenko and Yeltsin have since signed a series of confederation treaties, the most recent of which was signed December 1999, exactly eight years after Belarus and other former Soviet states gained their independence from Russia) designed to create a single state within the next decade; a common customs zone has already been established, and border controls have been abolished. The treaties are intentionally vague but do signal that both countries are pulling away from the West. Lukashenko violently suppressed the demonstrations that his economic measures and unionization efforts incited among young, Western-oriented Belarusians, drove opposition leaders abroad or imprisoned them,[2] closed down opposition newspapers, and has even proposed five-year prison sentences for anyone who publicly insults him. The word "dissident," no longer in use in Russia, has regained currency in Belarus.



WORLD WAR II ANNIVERSARY PARADE

Despite economic stagnation and political repression, Lukashenko's popularity appears to hold steady. Unionization has antagonized the intelligentsia, but it has the support of rural and elderly Belarusians who never accepted the nationalism of [illegible] and whose self-esteem might be raised by returning to the fold of an internationally feared, if domestically chaotic, Russia. Among former Soviet rulers, Lukashenko has been alone in his [illegible] Moscow protective of

their new powers, the last thing other ex-U.S.S.R. honchos want is closer ties with Russia. If Lukashenko's [illegible] it will set a precedent that could threaten the stability of countries with large ethnic Russian populations, such as Ukraine and Kazakhstan. In any event, the spectacle of a *[illegible]* poorly coutted, democratically elected national leader striving to strip his electorate of its sovereignty is bizarre and unsettling. Lukashenko has stated that if he pulls off this union, he will go down in history for it. No doubt he is right.

Inevitably, the thought of union between Belarus and Russia evokes the two peoples' recent, shared past—and its horrors. The next morning I decide to visit the memorial to the victims of Stalin's purges in Kurapaty Forest just north of Minsk. Discovery of these mass graves played a crucial role in igniting Belarusian separatism during the *perestroika* era.

My driver, Dmitry Varivonchik, is a flaxen-haired, burly fellow in his early thirties, a trained engineer who left his job at a state enterprise seven years ago for the private sector when the latter was flourishing. As we shoot down Minsk's lightly trafficked lanes in his minivan, he tells me he now earns the equivalent of a hundred dollars a month—a king's salary by local standards—driving for a foreign company that brokers the sale of coal from Russia to Eastern Europe and moonlighting by using the company vehicle for trips like this one. Years ago, before the Russian economic collapse and the steep devaluation of the Belarusian ruble, he was making three times as much. The union is not on his mind, making ends meet is.

The two-lane road leads us through lonely stretches of forest. We pull onto the shoulder and halt. Horseflies hurry us as we make our way through drizzling rain down a steep path into a pine grove echoing with the songs of thrushes and the pattering of raindrops. A few yards in stands a wooden cross engraved with the words [illegible]

pse, 1941. I glance around. Shadows throughout the grove resolve themselves into crosses, the farther in you look, the more crosses you see. Here lie the bodies of tens of thousands of Belarusians (estimates run from 30,000 to 900,000) who were executed by the Soviet authorities on trumped-up charges of treason, espionage, economic sabotage, bourgeois nationalism, anti-Soviet agitation, and so forth.

Since the days of the Mongols, there have been state-orchestrated massacres of innocents in Russian lands. Visits to sites like this occasion little distress among former Soviets, though the massacres tend to repeat themselves, and no generation feels safe—a twin gene for fear and apathy must characterize the DNA of Eastern Slavs. Dmitry shifts his weight from one foot to the other, then lights a cigarette. "You know, my grandfather was a warehouse manager in a village near here. The local *osobist*"—secret police agent—"accused him of economic sabotage. He was due to be shot the next morning. But during the night that same *osobist* was accused of treason and executed, and my grandfather survived."

I ask Dmitry if the Kurapaty memorial means anything to him. He shrugs. "We Belarusians are used to being occupied by one people or another. We're a tolerant people—we've had to learn tolerance—and we wouldn't have done such a thing ourselves. Our tolerance has been our undoing, in fact. But I don't have time to think about it. I have a wife and a daughter to feed."

The ram picks up, and we head back to the van.

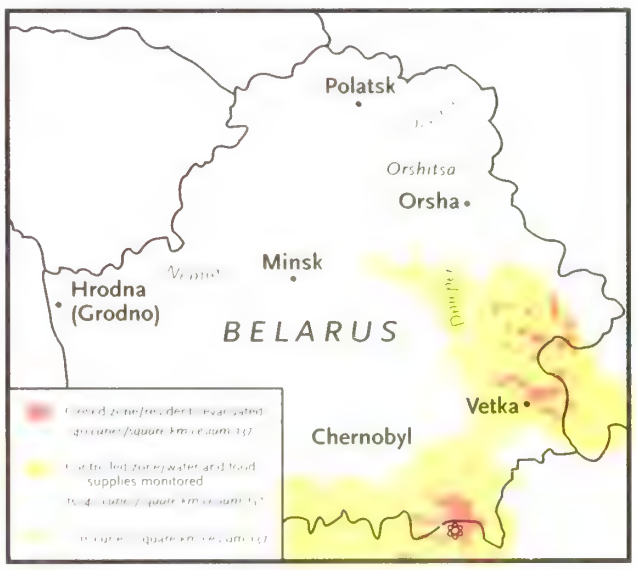
The next morning I climb aboard the *elektrichka*—or electric tram, for Orsha, a city of 130,000 straddling the confluence of the Dnieper and Orshitsa rivers, 125 miles northeast of Minsk near the Russian border. A friend of mine in Moscow has given me the address of her parents, Victor and Galina Shcherbo.

The *elektrichka* creaks its way through a softly contoured countryside of birch forest and fields, many of which lie fallow, belonging to defunct state and collective farms. Around the [illegible] produce plots where [illegible] themselves, they [illegible]. Farm boys, tanned and [illegible] drawn cart over mud [illegible] not a single tire imprint. At village stations bronzed men and hale women wearing track suits and leather shoes board the tram, their fingernails caked with soil, their forearms rippling with muscles as they drag along the sacks of beets and potatoes that they will sell in Orsha's market. Ahead of me, in a summer frock, sits a teenage girl, chewing sunflower seeds and spitting out the husks, her face wan with boredom, her delicate features still perceptible through a patina of country dirt. Farther on, a shirtless young man leans against the vestibule wall, swaying from vodka and drooping his head. As the car fills with people, a scent of sweat and booze pervades the air.

Orsha's history, like that of much of Belarus, amounts to a chronicle of trespass and adventurous devastation. It lies on the route that the Varangians (the Viking founders of Kievan Rus) traveled from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The Lithuanians fortified the town against incursions from Russia. Peter the Great stopped here during his war against the Swedes (which brought much collateral ruin to Belarus). Napoleon burned the city to the ground in 1812. During World War II, Orsha saw heavy fighting and was almost completely destroyed.

Today the rebuilt city straddles a junction of rusting rail lines and has a reputation as a gathering place for those discontented with the [illegible] of the Soviet empire. Still dominated in spirit by its [illegible]

RADIATION HOT SPOTS RESULTING FROM THE CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR POWER PLANT ACCIDENT



productive members of [illegible] to report for [illegible] to [illegible] to [illegible] prey to these [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] incidents from the European Commission [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Solzhenitsyn, who was persecuted and derided by Brezhnev. I want to ask about the prisons and Orsha's reputation for violence, but I sense that I should hang back. In the Russia of today, everyone slams the government, but here I feel as though a critical word would elicit gasps and stunned silence and a look over the shoulder to see who might have overheard.

"Lukashenko assures us of regular salaries," Victor says, filling a pause with a loyal utterance. Just across the border is Russia, where salaries are not paid. Suddenly a salary in hand, however small, seems like a grant from a benevolent czar, and we should be grateful for it, receiving it with bows as we genuflect away from the throne. Do the benevolent czar's unionist strivings appear illogical? The question doesn't arise: subjects don't question the czar, whom they trust to provide for them and set things right.

Later they walk me to my hotel, down streets dark due to "power conservation measures." Victor asks me to pardon him for not driving me back: his supply of gasoline, bought through connections from black-market traders, is running low. On that note we part.

For Victor and Galina, middle-aged folk with paying jobs and comforting memories of the Soviet years, Orsha might be bearable, but how do the young find it? Another friend of mine, Natasha Kiselyova, left the town when she was eighteen to study economics at an institute in Moscow, where we met. For seven years after receiving her diploma, she worked in a foreign company there and never mentioned Orsha to me. After my evening with Victor and Galina I find out Natasha has returned to visit. I call her, and we meet for tea.

She and I stand in the entrance way of the Beryozka Café, since there are no seats available inside. Sipping sandwiches, she appears comfortable in a faded denim dress and denim topsiders. She is tanned and looks fresher and healthier than she ever did in Moscow. She has married an Italian and moved to Italy. Orsha, she says, is a place to which she returns to see her parents and nothing more. "There are four prisons here. Whoever can get out of this town gets out. Imagine what a future a young woman would have here! Imagine! The men drink themselves to ruin or they're criminals or bums."

Soon the music starts and the lights come on: the Beryozka is closing. The crowd of revelers floods outside, a neighbor of Natasha's I will call Ira among them. (Like others I talked to, Ira asked that I not use her real name.) The two exchange startled greetings, and we are introduced. Ira's moon face is friendly, her eyes are a bright blue, and her long feathered hair bounces off her bare shoulders. She is eighteen. It's clear that Friday night and its partying mean a lot to her: she's dressed in a black evening gown and high heels, on which she totters.

We march out into the night. "There's this club—the Tri Limona [Three Lemons]. It's the only place that stays open after twelve. Let's go there," Ira says.

We fall in with the rowdy crowd and set off into the dark lanes running between *izby*. In a park on the bank of the Dnieper, behind a looming statue of Lenin, we find the Tri Limona, a single-room, garage-sized brick house with a bar and a wall of illuminated mirrored shelves supporting a dozen brands of vodka, cognac, and whiskey. We take a seat at a booth. Bullnecked men dance to Russian pop and perform scissor motions with their fingers à la John Travolta, their shaved heads spewing sweat as they shimmy; ashes flutter from the cigarettes in the hands of their dates, who pirouette and twirl in the yellow light.

We order pizza and a carafe of Finlandia vodka. There's nothing to do here in Orsha, Ira says. She's just finished school and is waiting for a sign of what the future holds for her. Natasha tells us about her life in Europe and about Sai Baba, India's "incarnation of God," and suggests that I write a story about him. For Ira this is all incredible. She opens her eyes wide at the talk of India and Italy and Moscow.

A glass is smashed on the floor. Then another. At the next table sit three youths, whose olive complexions and roughshod Russian suggest the Caucasus as their provenance. Maybe they are Chechens, maybe Ingushetians. With Zorbalike élan, seized by the muse, the one nearest us grabs another glass and smashes it. When the waitress runs over, he hurls a fistful of rubles at her and shouts, "I'll break what I want and I'll pay, whore!"

He gets up, steps over to our table, and extends his hand to Ira. "Miss! Please dance with me!" She declines. He pauses, then returns to his table.

"*Khatchiki!* I can't stand them!" Ira says.

"Shsh!" hisses Natasha. *Khatchiki* is offensive slang for people from the Caucasus.

At the next song he smashes his empty vodka bottle, hurls more money toward the bar, and in seconds is standing at our table, swaying and holding out his hand.

"Girl, dance with me!"

"No thanks," Ira says, shrinking from his hand. "Really, I'm very tired."

"I said dance!" He wobbles toward her.

"Look," I say to the intruder, as I stand up, "she's tired and doesn't want to dance. She—"

Natasha grabs my arm and starts pushing me out of the booth, whispering, "Let's go! Oh, please, let's get out of here!" Ira jumps up and shoves past him, and we exit into the humid night.

The door slams behind us. The three youths have set out after us. The dance aficionado seizes my shoulder and puts his arm around my neck, but his buddies hang back. His voice slurs with vodka but his grip is sober. "*Bratok* [Brother], listen to me. Who the hell do you think you are, telling me who I can dance with?"

I gently remove his arm and affect a calm demeanor, a friendly tone, as I have done in the past with aggressive drunks in Russia, but my heart starts pounding like a gong, and blood surges in my temples. "Listen, maybe we've all had a bit too much to drink. We should just mend and go home. It's late."

His comrades take up position beside me; they are readying themselves to grab my arms so that he can slug me at will. Natasha and Ira stand back, wringing their hands.

He lurches into my face. "So who the fuck do you think you are, telling me to leave this bitch alone? Huh?"

He strikes out, aiming for my eye, but I pull away in time and his fist misses me. Again he locks his arm around my neck; again I push him back. His friends stay at my sides, but they don't attack. We [illegible] humiliation to insult.

"Oh, let's go!" [illegible] "Natasha, [illegible]"

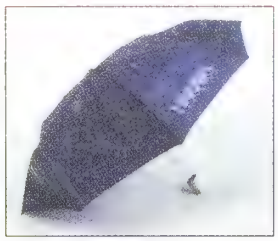
"I [illegible] what else I can do."

"Jeff!" I [illegible] by the sudden [illegible] "That" my face."

I [illegible] but he [illegible] hands me my passport, which [illegible] knowwhat to me. [illegible] pocket, [illegible] cattle, then [illegible] the belligerent away.

"Oh, my God!" Natasha exclaims. She and Ira check me for wounds. My shirt sleeve has suffered tom at

Harper's Magazine Merchandise



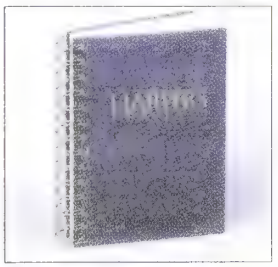
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repeatedly until Catherine the Great acquired it during the First Partition of Poland in 1772. Napoleon's invasion of Russia began nearby, and destruction was widespread during both world wars. Time and time again war has visited Polatsk and leveled it. The cathedrals on its banks are restorations.

I have come to Polatsk for the third of July—World War II Liberation Day for Belarus. At noon a parade is scheduled to take place in the town center, starting from the columned façade of my hotel. I muppost loudspeakers pipe Soviet war songs into the sun-drenched air. But there are few celebrants, perhaps no more people than would be out and about on any mild Saturday afternoon.

Suddenly there is a bugle blast, and, with heroic music blaring from every corner, fifty or so veterans in their seventies, besuited and bemedaled, set off down Marx Avenue, followed by blasé recruits fifty years younger carrying a red flag emblazoned with [illegible] BELARUS and a hammer and sickle. A single tank chugs along behind, fouling the air with its exhaust. At Lenin Square they halt for fist-waving addresses from the mayor and various veterans. "We must unite with our brethren in great Russia. . . . Clinton began World War III in Yugoslavia. Belarus is next in line for NATO aggression. . . . Woe upon those in the West who dare to dream of conquering great Russia! . . . More unity with brotherly Russia!" These veterans are among the most fervent supporters of Lukashenko, the generation that remembers war and hunger and slaughter, those for whom a baton of sausage in hand and peace at home prove a ruler's legitimacy.

The voices resound. Children fidget. Families begin breaking away, and soon the veterans and city officials are shouting to a couple dozen [illegible] to be polite to leave.

Later, on Skaryny Square, during the violet summer dusk, a concert is held. Police in camouflage fatigues stand in rows to one side. After an introduction containing no words about war, Yugoslavia, union, or politics, a young Russian-language band pounds out a mix of Westernized Russian pop songs, country-and-western tunes, and rock-and-roll hits for a crowd of baggy-trousered teens for whom Soviet power and the heroic deeds of fifty years ago can be little more than ballads, banners, and the stories of old people.

It says much about the state of the Belarusian economy that President Lukashenko foresees its salvation in a union with Russia. (In one respect he is right: union would permit Belarus, which has few natural resources aside from peat, access to Russian oil and gas.) Encouraging statistics presented by the Belarusian government—a per annum growth rate of 8 percent, a 10 percent increase in industrial output, a 3 percent unemployment rate—bear no relation to the queues for food that have reappeared across the country, the chronic shortages of gasoline, the pensions and salaries averaging the equivalent of $10 and $50 a month, respectively, and the dying private sector. Private businesses survive now only if they operate under the protection of Lukashenko's elite. The KGB and tax authorities harass those who don't, closing down and even jailing unconnected entrepreneurs.

The crash of the interim national currency, the Belarusian ruble (a.k.a. the *zaychik*, or bunny, on account of the furry little rabbit depicted hopping across now-extinct one-ruble notes), has been among the most conspicuous failures of Lukashenko's market socialism. Plans to introduce a permanent national currency, the taler, have been shelved since Lukashenko's ascension to power. The Belarusian ruble, which in 1997 traded at the state rate of 699 to the dollar, hit 25,964 by December of 1997. By the time of my trip in July of 1999, $1 bought 300,000 rubles. Three-digit inflation keeps pace with the devaluation, making it senseless for Belarusians to keep savings in anything but cash U.S. dollars. (As in Russia, Belarusians do not trust banks, preferring to keep their funds under the mattress.) Legally acquiring dollars, however, is next to impossible: exchange bureaus don't sell

them, choosing to retain or dispose of them on the black market at rates 50 percent higher. As in Soviet times, the black market has become the only option for most Belarusians looking to safeguard their savings from inflation, though penalties for "illegal currency transactions"—the purchase of hard currency from other than state-licensed exchange bureaus—range from heavy fines to arrest, and always involve confiscation of the money.

Lukashenko's proposed union would do away with this bunny money and reestablish the Russian ruble—a dubious achievement by any measure. Yet the union treaty stipulates that Belarusian monetary policy would remain in his hands, and that the Belarusian central bank would retain the right to print Russian rubles, both of which measures raise fears of inflation among Russian politicians who are knowledgeable about economics.

From Polatsk, by way of Minsk, I have arrived in Hrodna (Grodno), in westernmost Belarus. Even by Belarusian standards, Hrodna has suffered a high number of overlords. Starting in 1772, the city bounced from Polish to Russian to Russian to Germany, and then back to Poland. Hrodna was still known as Grodno in Poland but it once belonged to a secret codicil to the nonaggression pact signed by Stalin and Hitler in 1939 that returned it to the Soviet fold.

Hrodna's tidy streets and courteous inhabitants manifest the liberalism that developed during its prewar years as a part of the West. But the Hrodna region did not submit quietly to Soviet rule. For a decade after the Second World War, armed bands of Belarusian independence fighters harried the Soviet authorities, hindering the collectivization of agriculture and the spread of Soviet power. Hrodna remains a city of dubious and divided allegiances.

My guide to the city is a local historian in her thirties whom I will call Svetlana. Trilingual (she speaks Russian, Belarusian, and Polish, though she's most at ease in Russian), Svetlana talks with pride of her affinity to Poland and her research trips to France. She's outspoken in her opinions, and the trade of this day makes her prickly.

After I join the city's center, Svetlana and I hike up to the Neman River and follow it for a while until we turn left to an ancient, [illegible] stone church. The twelfth-century Orthodox Church of Saints Boris and Gleb, the second-oldest building in Belarus, is locked. A young man in black and white approaches with keys in hand and opens the door for us. "Oh, *Batyushka* [Father], we're lucky you came," Svetlana says. "Please meet our guest from America."

The priest sets his eyes on me; they are icy blue. A crest of flaxen hair rises above his jutting brow; his mouth is grim. Looking away, he motions us inside.

The church's interior has been restored and has a modern, unappealing look. Svetlana explains the iconostasis to me. The priest, who has been following me with his eyes, interrupts her. "America, you say? Your planes did a good job bombing Orthodox monasteries in Kosovo."

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A FARMER WHO REFUSED TO LEAVE HIS HOME IN A RADIOACTIVE ZONE

pogrom hatred flashes from his eyes. "You must have the right convictions. You must follow the one Truth."

This debate is not between two people but between two world views: the Eastern absolutism of Moscow as the Third Rome, with its Holy Truth and its God-appointed executor, and the Western-derived pluralism of the intelligentsia. Here is the doctrine of rule power, here the theology that would wrest that power from him. Reconciliation is impossible.

The priest has to close up and asks us to leave. When we step outside, Svetlana is trembling. The *batyushka* [illegible] As his parting shot he remarks that Belarus should never have given up its nuclear weapons.

A priest advocating nuclear [illegible] When Svetlana climbs down [illegible] admits that he is an agent. "His Russian is only [illegible] the KGB has an easy time winning over peasants. This is the lesson [illegible] the Soviets had a tough time pacifying, and the intelligentsia attends this church. The KGB knows this, and they want to keep an eye on us."

Plausible conjecture. The Belarusian Orthodox Church[3] is not autocephalous; it answers to the Moscow Patriarchy, and the Russian Orthodox Church has always acted as an organ of the state, whether czarist, Soviet, or post-Soviet. Absolutism in religion and politics has distinguished Russian polity since the rise of Muscovy. Throughout the Russian and Soviet empires God and caesar were one, with God's sacerdotalists often serving as caesar's agents. Suspicions that some priests were hiding secret police epaulets under their cassocks were confirmed when, after the fall of the Soviet Union, many high-ranking Orthodox clergymen were exposed as members of the KGB.

Our talk of the KGB leads us to the subject of union, and I ask what future Svetlana sees for herself if Belarus and Russia unite. "In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were huge revolts against Moscow after it took over Belarus. I wouldn't exclude such an outcome today."

"So would you be prepared to fight for independence?"

"Oh, well... really, we've been too beaten down to think of fighting... we're used to foreign rule... but maybe someone here would protest, somewhere."

NOTHING HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN, NOTHING HAS BEEN FORGIVEN asserts the bold lettering over the memorial to the 128 citizens of the village of Papsuyevka who lost their lives during World War II.

The memorial lies. There is no one left to forget and nothing left

Hoping to drive their Orthodox population under tighter spiritual and political control, Belarus's Catholic Lithuanian and Polish overlords created the Uniate Church, which recognized the primacy of the Pope but allowed adherents to worship with Eastern rites. For a time, the Uniate faith spread, but when Belarus returned to Russian rule it was persecuted and largely wiped out. Today, some 70 percent of Belarusians are Orthodox, and 20 percent are Catholic.

to be forgotten. Papsuyevka, near Vetka in southeastern Belarus, is only ninety miles north of Chernobyl. When the reactor melted down in 1986, Papsuyevka was doused in radiation that exceeded forty curies per square kilometer, which rendered it uninhabitable for decades. In 1991 the Soviet government finally evacuated and resettled Papsuyevka's 108 families and marked the road through the town with a sign reading ВАЛЕНКИ! ПАПСУЙЕВКА! ЗОНА ПОВЕРЕЦЬ!

The horrific effects of Chernobyl have been thoroughly documented, and it would be easy to imagine that human history in the region ended with the meltdown. But while visiting an exhibition of Old Believer icons in Vetka, I heard rumors that people were still living in the radioactive zones. Short trips to the area supposedly do no harm, so I hired a van and a guide and set out to investigate.

Next to the memorial a statue of a defiant Red Army soldier stands enwrapped in creepers descending from the trees. Farther on a bust of Lenin glares vigilantly into the steely noon light above a decrepit Board of Honor (a glass case in which the portraits of model Communist villagers were once displayed). The wind rises, whishing through the collapsed roofs and glassless windows of the houses at my back. My guide, whom I will call Anna, picks her way toward me through the rubbish. She swats at the dragonflies and other bugs whirling around us. "These are turn-of-the century houses. What a pity they had to be abandoned. Houses die quickly without human care."

We jump into Anna's minivan and speed off down the road through the scrub forest and weed-choked fields of the contaminated zone. In places the earth is sandy, and miniature dunes edge onto the tarmac. Just beyond another ВАЛЕНКИ! ПАПСУЙЕВКА! ЗОНА ПОВЕРЕЦЬ! sign cluster a few *izby* and in front of them, on a bench, sits a middle-aged couple. Their eyes, bleary, vaguely ornery, fall on us.

As we slow to a halt alongside them, they straighten up. Another man, his ears cocked in our direction, feels his way toward us along the side of the house, but eyes rolling white: he is blind. A gnarled old woman, looking like a troll in a tattered track suit, emerges to peer at us from a doorway.

Anna says to me, "This is Novaya Ilameyevka. It was evacuated."

"Who are you and what do you want?" the man on the bench demands.

We jump out, and Anna introduces us. "Oh!" he exclaims. "We thought you might be marauders! Marauders are the only ones who come out here. They come from Vetka and rob the houses [residents were prohibited from taking their belongings with them during the evacuation]. They killed one of our neighbors recently. Bashed his head in to steal a colt." Marauders, not neglect, he says, reduced the houses in Papsuyevka to ruins.

A dust twister spins past, peppering our eyes.

"Why have you stayed on?" I ask.

The wife answers. "We saved up all our lives to build this house. Do you think we were going to let the state drive us out? That's the way things are here in the Soviet Union—you build something, then the state steals it from you. No sir, we refused to move, even though they cut off our electricity and gas and water." Her lips part to show steel teeth.

"Anyway," the old man says, "in '91 the state evacuated the families to Vetka, which is almost as radioactive as here. What good would it have done us to move there?"

There is no defiance in their words, only resignation.

While we talk, twisters coil the sand and insects crawl all over us, enmeshing themselves in our sweat. The radiation comes to mind, and what these people must have lived through, and the resignation that roots them to this wasteland of bugs and gamma rays, holding out against marauders. We take our leave and climb into the minivan for the ride back to Vetka, here and there coming upon other villages with their scatterings of radiation homesteaders, who dart behind their doors and fade, taking us for marauders.

This seems to be one of the real-ly upsetting and interesting Belarusian myths. Belarusians, more than most Russian-speaking peoples, cherish their rural communities, occupy themselves with personal harvests, and they have little energy left for matters of state or sovereignty. The sphere of culture and political tradition running from the eleventh century split between the Eastern Orthodox and Western churches persists today. The passivity instilled by foreign rule and religion-sanctioned autocracy, combined with the terror-bred nihilism born of the Stalin decades and the conservatism deriving from just tolerable economic strains, ensure that Belarus will remain in the Russian domain, whether or not the two states unify and regardless of how most Belarusians feel about union; few associate personal disapproval of policies with the need to take collective action.

Although Lukashenko and his elite stand to gain from the union, they are not the cause of Belarus's statehood dilemma but opportunists exploiting it, for nihilism and passivity create a vacuum that tyrants and then schemers fill. And if union is consecrated, the terms hardly matter for either party. Russia is vast, and adding one more impoverished province, one more realm of neglect, will probably have no negative effect on Russia economically and at the same time will provide it with buffer territory along the borders with new NATO countries. Belarusians will again make do with satrapy status, reacquiring, in exchange for their freedom, a mythology not their own. They have not created or sustained a national idea that could counter it. They could not have: Russification has slain their culture; it has turned them into the Buffer People.

We reach the hovels dotting the fields around Vetka. Maybe during Belarus's march back into the embrace of Russia, I think, chance and evolution will impose change where none was striven for, and Belarus will halt and stand up for itself. But this notion resembles a fantasy, a fantasy as realizable as the national myths of its boundless eastern neighbor. ■

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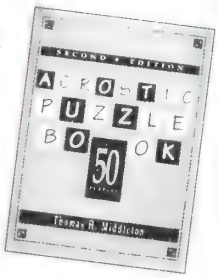
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THE SUN-DOG TRAIL

By Jack London

Sitka Charley smoked his pipe and gazed thoughtfully at the newspaper illustration on the wall. For half an hour he had been steadily regarding it, and for half an hour I had been slyly watching him. Something was going on in that mind of his, and, whatever it was, I knew it was well worth knowing. He had lived life, and seen things, and performed that prodigy of prodigies, namely, the turning of his back upon his own people, and, in so far as it was possible for an Indian, becoming a white man even in his mental processes. As he phrased it himself, he had come into the warm, sat among us, by our fires, and become one of us.

We had struck this deserted cabin after a hard day on trail. The dogs had been fed, the supper dishes washed, the beds made, and we were now enjoying that most delicious hour that comes each day, on the Alaskan trail, when nothing intervenes between the tired body and bed save the smoking of the evening pipe.

"Well?" I finally broke the silence.

He took the pipe from his mouth and said, simply, "I do not understand."

He smoked on again, and again removed the pipe, using it to point at the illustration.

"That picture — what does it mean? I do not understand."

I looked at the picture. A man, with a preposterously wicked face, his right hand pressed dramatically to his heart, was falling backward to the floor. Confronting him, with a face that was a composite of destroying angel and Adonis, was a man holding a smoking revolver.

"One man is killing the other man," I said, aware of a distinct bepuzzlement of my own and of failure to explain.

"Why?" asked Sitka Charley.

"I do not know," I confessed.

"That picture is all end," he said. "It has no beginning."

"It is life," I said.

"Life has beginning," he objected.

"Look at that picture," I continued, pointing to another lecture. "It means something. Tell me what it means to you."

He studied it for several minutes.

"The little girl is sick," he said finally. "That is the doctor looking at her. They have been up all night — see, the oil is low in the lamp — the first morning light is coming in at the window. It is very great sickness. She will die, that is why the doctor has his hand. That is the mother. It is her sickness. Because the mother," he added, "is the object of love and she is crying."

"And now you understand the picture," I cried.

He shook his head, and asked, "The little girl — does she die?"

It was my turn for silence.

"Does she die?" he reiterated. "You are a painter-man. Maybe you know."

"No, I do not know," I confessed.

"It is not life," he delivered himself, dogmatically. "In life little girl die or get well. Something happen in life. In picture no thing happen. No. I do not understand pictures."

"Pictures are bits of life," I said. "We paint bits we see. I see, for instance, Charley, you are coming along the trail last night. You see a cabin. The window is lighted. You look through the window for one second, or for two seconds, or for three seconds, and you see something and you go on your way. You see maybe a man writing a letter. You saw something without beginning or end. Nothing happened. Yet it was a bit of life you saw. You remember it afterward. It is like a picture in your memory. The window is the frame of the picture."

For a long time he smoked in silence. He nodded his head several times, and I guessed once or twice. Then he knocked the ashes from his pipe,

Jack London (1876–1916) was born in San Francisco. [illegible] the novels of Darwin, Marx, and Nietzsche [illegible] publication of The Call of the Wild, The Sea-Wolf, and White Fang. *Unable to match the success of his celebrated [illegible] of forty books including* The Iron Heel, South Sea Tales, *and* The Cruise of the Snark. *"The Sun-Dog Trail" was published in* Collier's *on December 19, 1908, and later appeared in* The Assassination Bureau, Ltd. *and* Other Stories *and in* Jack London's Tales of Adventure. *This story is from* The Complete Short Stories of Jack London: Volume Two: Children of the Frost, The Faith of Men, and Other Stories, *published in 2013 by* Stanford University Press. *It is reprinted here with permission.*

[illegible] "I have [illegible] pictures of life," he began; "pictures not painted but composed [illegible] have looked [illegible] window at the man writing the letter. I have [illegible] of life, with [illegible] and, without understanding.

With a sudden change of position he turned his eyes full upon me and regarded me thoughtfully.

"I know you," he said; "you are a [illegible] man. How would you paint the picture I saw, a picture without [illegible] the colors of which I do not understand, a piece of life with the northern lights for a candle and Alaska for a frame?"

"It is a large canvas," I murmured.

"There are many names for this picture," he said. "But as the picture there is no name, [illegible], and it comes into my mind to call it 'The Sun-dog Trail.' It was seven years ago, the fall of '97, when I saw the woman first time. At Lake Linderman I had one canoe. I came over Chilcoot Pass with two thousand pounds to Dawson. Everybody make to Klondike at that time. Many people on trail. Many people chop down trees and make [illegible] water now in the air, snow on the ground, ice on the lake, on the river. Ice, but more snow, more ice, any day maybe freeze-up come; then no more water, all ice, everybody walk; Dawson six hundred miles; long time walk. Boat go very quick. Everybody [illegible] five hundred dollars, six hundred dollars for canoe. 'Charley, three hundred dollars,' 'Charley, four hundred dollars,' [illegible] no. I am letter-carrier.

"[illegible] minutes I get to Lake Lindeman. I walk all night and am much tired. I go to sleep. Then I [illegible] and I see [illegible] Stewart River. Then I [illegible] Thirty Mile River. I see [illegible] woman, she is young, very pretty; [illegible] twenty-five years old. She look at me. I look at her. She is very tired. She is no dance woman. I see that right away. She is good woman, and she is very tired.

"'You are Sitka Charley,' she says. 'I go to Dawson,' she says. 'I go in your canoe—how much?'

"I do not want anybody in my canoe. I do not like to say no. So I say, 'One thousand dollars.' She look at me very hard, then she says, 'When you start?' I say right away. Then she says all right, she will give me one thousand dollars.

"What can I say? I do not want the woman, yet have I given my word that for one thousand dollars she can come. And that woman, that young woman, all alone on the trail, there in the snow, she take out one thousand dollars in greenbacks, and she put them in my hand. I look at money, I look at her. What can I say? I say: 'No; my canoe very small. There is no room for outfit.' She laugh. She says: 'I am great traveller. This is my outfit.' She kick one small pack in the snow. It is two fur robes, canvas outside, some woman's clothes inside. I pick it up. Maybe thirty-five pounds. I am surprised. She take it away from me. She says, 'Come, let us start.' She carries pack into canoe. What can I say? I put my blankets into canoe. We start.

"And that is the way I saw the woman first time. The wind was fair. I put up small sail. The canoe went very fast. The woman was much afraid. 'What for you come Klondike much afraid?' I ask. She laugh at me, a hard laugh, but she is still much afraid. Also she is very tired. I run canoe through rapids to Lake Bennett. Water very bad, and woman cry out because she is afraid. We go down Lake Bennett. Snow, ice, wind like a gale, but woman is very tired and go to sleep.

"That night we make camp at White Horse Rapids. Woman sit by fire and cut supper. I look at her. She is pretty. She is [illegible] hair. There is much hair, and it is brown, also sometimes it is like gold in the firelight when she turn her head, so, and flashes come from it like golden fire. The eyes are large and brown. When she smile—how we can I say?—when she smile I know white man like to kiss her, just like that, when she smile. She never do hard work. Her hands are soft like a baby's hand. She is not thin, but round like a baby, her arm, her leg, her muscles, all soft and round like baby. Her waist is small, and when she stand up, when she walk, or move her head or arm, it is—I do not know the word—but it is nice to look at, like—maybe I say she is built on lines like the lines of a good canoe, just like that,—and when she move she is like the movement of the good canoe sliding through still water or leaping through water when it is white and fast and angry. It is very good to see.

"I ask her what is her name. She laugh, then she says, 'Mary Jones; that is my name.' But I know all the time that Mary Jones is not her name.

"It is very cold in canoe, and because of cold sometimes she not feel good. Sometimes she feel good and she sing. Her voice is like a silver bell and I feel good all over like when I go into church at Holy Cross Mission and when she sing I feel strong and paddle like hell. Then she laugh and says, 'You think we get to Dawson before freeze-up, Charley?' Sometimes she sit in canoe and is thinking far away, her eyes like that, all empty. She does not see Sitka Charley, nor the ice, nor the snow. She is far away. Sometimes, when she is thinking far away, her face is not good to see. It looks like a face that is angry, like the face of one man when he want to kill another man.

"Last day to Dawson very bad. Shore-ice in all the eddies, mush-ice in the stream. I cannot paddle. The canoe freeze to ice. All the time we go down Yukon in the ice. Then ice stop, canoe stop, everything stop. 'Let us go to shore,' the woman says. I say no; better wait. By and by everything start down-stream again. There is much snow; I cannot see. At eleven o'clock at night everything stop. At one o'clock everything start again. At three o'clock everything stop. Canoe is smashed like egg-shell, but it is on top of ice and cannot sink. I hear dogs howling. We wait; we sleep. By and by morning come. There is no more snow. It is the freeze-up, and there is Dawson

Canoe smash and stop right at Dawson. Sitka Charley has come in with two thousand letters on very last winter

"The woman rent a cabin on the hill, and for one week I see her no more. Then, one day, she come to me. 'Charley,' she says, 'how do you like to work for me? You drive dogs, make camp, travel with me.' I say that I make too much money carrying letters. She says, 'Charley, I will pay you more money.' I tell her that pick-and-shovel man get fifteen dollars a day in the mines. She says, 'That is four hundred and fifty dollars a month.' And I say, 'Sitka Charley is no pick-and-shovel man.' Then she says: 'I understand, Charley. I will give you seven hundred and fifty dollars each month.' It is a good price, and I go to work for her. I buy for her dogs and sled. We travel up Klondike, up Bonanza and El-dorado, over to Indian River, to Sulphur Creek, to Dominion, back across divide to Gold Bottom and to Too Much Gold, and back to Dawson. All the time she look for something, I do not know what.

"She has a small revolver, which she carries in her belt. Sometimes, on trail, she makes practice with revolver.

"At Dawson comes the man. Which way he come I do not know. Only do I know he is *cheechaquo* — what you call tender foot. His hands are soft. He never do hard work. At first I think maybe he is her husband. But he is too young. He is maybe twenty years old. His eyes blue, his hair yellow, he has a little mustache which is yellow. His name is John Jones. Maybe he is her brother. I do not know.

"One night I am asleep at Dawson. He wake me up. He says, 'Get the dogs ready, we start.' No more do I ask questions, so I get the dogs ready and we start. We go down the Yukon. It is night-time, it is November, and it is very cold — sixty-five below. She is sott. He is sott. The cold bites. They get tired. They cry under their breaths to themselves. By and by I say better we stop and make camp. But they say that they will go on. After that I say nothing. All the time, day after day, it is that way. They are very sott. They get stiff and sore. They do not undress and moccasins, and their feet hurt very much. They limp, they stagger like drunken people, they cry under their breaths, and all the time they say 'On! on! We will go on!'



"We make Circle City. That for which they look is not there. I think now that we will rest, and rest the dogs. But we do not rest; not for one day do we rest. 'Come,' says the woman to the man, 'let us go on.' And [illegible] go on. We leave the [illegible] Yukon [illegible] the west and I write [illegible] to the Dawson country. Here no [illegible] from there [illegible] that [illegible] each, they look [illegible] at me, we are the last trails Circle City.

"It is a hard journey. December is almost gone. The days are short. It is very cold.

"We limp into Circle City. It is Christmas eve. I dance, drink, make a good time, for to-morrow is Christmas day and we will rest. But no. It is five o'clock in the morning of Christmas morning. I am two hours asleep. The man and by-and-by I say, 'Come, Charley.'

[illegible] the fire. We cut [illegible] the fire and we cut down the Yukon.

I myself am very weary. I myself [illegible] I, myself, have led a dog-team many [illegible] and I, myself, do not understand the ways of the trail. Besides, their cough is very bad — the dry cough that makes strong men swear and weak men cry. Every day they [illegible]. Never do they rest the dogs. Always do they buy new dogs. At every camp, at every post, at every Indian village do they cast out the tired dogs and put in fresh dogs. They have much money, money without end, and like water they spend it. They are crazy.' Sometimes I think — for there is a devil in them that drives them. They cry aloud in their sleep at night. And in the day, as they stagger along the trail, they cry under their breath.

"We pass Fort Yukon. We pass Fort Hamilton. We pass Minook. January has come and I hear [illegible]. The days are very short. At nine o'clock comes daylight. At three o'clock comes night. And I am tired. And even I, Sitka Charley, am tired. Will we go on forever and ever without end?' I do not know. But always I look ahead on the trail for that which they try to find. There are few people on the trail. Sometimes we travel one hundred miles and never see a human life. The northern lights flame in the sky, and the sun-dogs dance, and the air is filled with frost-dust.

I am Sitka Charley. I am a strong man. I have driven on the trail, and all my days have I driven on the trail. And yet these two baby wolves made me tired. Their eyes are sunk deep in their heads, [illegible] me. I look sometimes like the eyes of the dead. They look into the back of my head. I am raw from many freezings. Sometimes [illegible] the mountain-sheep [illegible] I suffer much [illegible] the night. And I am the man who [illegible] and I say, 'Come, let us go on.'

"Sometimes, at the trading-posts, the man and woman get letters. I do [illegible] the letter. But I [illegible] and I see in the letter [illegible] with him privately. He says it is a man with one eye who comes into the fort — a man who travels fast down the Yukon. That is all. But I know that the baby wolves are after the man with the one eye.

It is February, and we have travelled fifteen hundred miles. We are getting near Bering Sea, and there are storms and blizzards. The going is hard. We come to Anvig. I do not know, but I think she they get a letter at Anvig, for they are much excited, and they say, 'Come, hurry, let us go on.' But I say we must buy grub, and they say we must travel light and fast. Also, they say that we can get grub at Charley McKeon's cabin. Then do I know that they take the big cut off, for it is there that Charley McKeon lives where the Black Rock stands by the trail.

"Before we start I talk maybe two minutes with the priest at Anvig. Yes, there is a man with one eye who has gone by and who travels fast. And I know that for which they look is the man with the one eye. We leave Anvig with little grub, and travel light and fast. We take the big cut off, and the trail is fresh. The baby wolves have their noses down to the trail, and they say, 'Hurry!' All the time do they say: 'Hurry! Faster! Faster!' It is hard on the dogs. We have not much food, and we cannot give them enough to eat, and they grow weak. Also, they must work hard. The woman has true sorrow for them, and often, because of them, the tears are in her eyes. But the devil in her that drives her on will not let her stop and rest the dogs.

"And then we come upon the man with the one eye. He is in the snow by the trail and his legs broken. Because of the fire he has made a good camp, and there I can see on his blankets for three days and keeping a fire going. When we [illegible] him, he is swearing. Never have I heard a man swear like that man. I am glad. Now that they have found [illegible] which they look, so will I have rest. But the woman says: 'Let us start. Hurry!'

"I am surprised. But the man with [illegible] me your grub. You will get more grub at McKeon's cabin to-morrow. Send McKeon back for me. But do you go on. So we give him our grub, which is not much, and we chop wood for his fire, and we take his strongest dogs and go on. We left the man with one eye there in the snow, and he died there in the snow, for McKeon never went back for him.

"That day and that night we had nothing to eat, and all next day we travelled fast, and we were weak with hunger. Then we came to the Black Rock, which rose five hundred feet above the trail. It was at the end of the day. Darkness was coming, and we could not find the cabin of McKeon. We slept hungry, and in the morning looked for the cabin. It was not there, which was a strange thing for everybody knew that McKeon lived in a cabin at Black Rock. We were near to the coast, where the wind blows hard and there is much snow. Everywhere were there small hills of snow where the wind had piled it up. I have a thought, and I dig in one and another of the hills of snow. Soon I find the walls of the cabin, and I dig down to the door. I go inside. McKeon is dead. Maybe two or three weeks he is dead. A sickness had come upon him so that he could not leave the cabin. He had eaten his grub and died. I looked for his cache, but there was no grub in it.

"'Let us go on,' said the woman. Her eyes were hungry, and her hand was upon her heart, as with the hurt of something inside. She swayed back and forth like a tree in the wind as she stood there.

"'Yes, let us go on,' said the man. His voice was hollow, like the *klonk* of an old raven, and he was hunger-mad. His eyes were like live coals of fire, and as his body rocked to and fro, so rocked his soul inside. And I, too, said, 'Let us go on.' For that one thought laid upon me like a lash for every mile of fifteen hundred miles, had burned itself into my soul, and I think that I, too, was mad. Besides, we could only go on, for there was no grub. And we went on, giving no thought to the man with the one eye in the snow.

"The snow had covered the trail,

nd there was no sign that men had ever come or gone that way. All day the wind blew and the snow fell, and all day we travelled. Then the woman began to fall. Then the man. I did not fall, but my feet were heavy, and I caught my toes and stumbled many times.

"That night is the end of February. I kill three ptarmigan with the woman's revolver, and we are made somewhat strong again. But the dogs have nothing to eat. They try to eat their harness, which is of leather and walrus-hide, and I must fight them off with a club and hang all the harness in a tree. And all night they howl and fight around that tree. But we do not mind. We sleep like dead people, and in the morning get up like dead people out of our graves and go on along the trail.

That morning is the 1st of March, and on that morning I see the first sign of that after which the baby wolves are in search. It is clear weather, and cold. The sun stay longer in the sky, and there are sun-dogs flashing on either side, and the air is bright with frost-dust. The snow falls no more upon the trail, and I see the fresh sign of dogs and sled. There is one man with that outfit, and I see in the snow that he is not strong. He, too, has not enough to eat. The young wolves see the fresh sign, too, and they are much excited. 'Hurry!' they say. All the time they say: 'Hurry! Faster, Charley, faster!'

"We make hurry very slow. All the time the man and the woman fall down. When they try to ride on sled, the dogs are too weak, and the dogs fall down. Besides, it is so cold that if they ride on the sled they will freeze. It is very easy for a hungry man to freeze. When the woman fall down, the man help her up. Sometimes the woman help the man up. By and by both fall down and cannot get up, and I must help them up all the time, else they will not get up and will die there in the snow. This is very hard work, for I am greatly weary, and as well I must drive the dogs, and the man and woman are very heavy, with no strength in their bodies. So by and by, I, too, fall down in the snow, and there is no one to help me up. I must get up by myself. And always do I get up by myself, and help them up, and make the dogs go on.

"That night I eat one ptarmigan, and we are very hungry. And that night the man says to me, 'What time start to-morrow, Charley?' It is like the voice of a ghost. I say, 'All the time you make start at five o'clock.' 'To-morrow,' he says, 'we will start at three o'clock.'

"And we start at three o'clock. It is clear and cold, and there is no wind. When daylight comes we can see a long way off. And it is very quiet. We can hear no sound but the beat of our hearts, and in the silence that is a very loud sound. We are like sleep-walkers, and we walk in dreams until we fall down; and then we know we must get up, and we see the trail once more and hear the beating of our hearts.

"In the morning we come upon the last-night camp of the man who is before us. It is a poor camp, the kind a man makes who is hungry and without strength. On the snow there are pieces of blanket and of canvas, and I know what has happened. His dogs have eaten their harness, and he has made new harness out of his blankets. The man and woman stare hard at what is to be seen. Their eyes are foul-mad and hunger-mad, and burn like fire deep in their heads. Their faces are like the faces of people who have died of hunger, and their cheeks are black with the dead flesh of many freezings. We come to where we can see a long way over the snow, and that for which they look is before them. A mile away there are black spots upon the snow. The black spots move. My eyes are dim, and I must stitten my soul to see. And I see one man with dogs and a sled. The baby wolves see, too. They can no longer talk, but they whisper: 'Oh, quick! for us hurry!'

"And they fall down, but they go on. The man who is before us, his blanket harness breaks often and he must stop and mend it. Our harness is good, for I have hung it in trees at night

[illegible] and there is no sign that men have ever come or gone that way. All day long the wind blew and the snow fell, and all day we travelled. Then the woman began to fall. Then the man. I did not fall, but my feet were heavy, and I caught my toes and stumbled many times.

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At eleven [illegible] camp [illegible] to-morrow [illegible] I see him fall down many times in the snow.

"So we go [illegible] far away. We [illegible] three hours [illegible] We do not walk. All the time we fall down. We stand up and stagger two steps, make three steps, [illegible] fall down again. And all the time I must help up the man, and he must help me. Sometimes they rise to their knees and fall forward, maybe [illegible] before they can get their feet again, and stagger two steps and fall. But always do they fall forward. Standing or kneeling, always do they fall forward, gaining on the trail each time by the length of their bodies.

"Sometimes they crawl on hands and knees like animals that live in the forest. We go like snail. Like snails that no distance we go so slow. And yet we go faster than the man who is before us. For he, too, falls all the time, and there is no Sitka Charley to lift him up. Now he is two hundred yards away. After a long time he is one hundred yards away.

"It is crumm[illegible] sight. I want to laugh out loud. He [illegible] like that, it is so funny. It is [illegible] dead men and dead dogs. It is like a dream when you have a nightmare and run away very fast [illegible] your life and go very slow. The man who is with me is mad. The woman is mad. I am mad. All the world is mad. And I want to laugh, it is so funny.

"The stronger man who is before us leaves his dogs behind and goes on alone across the snow. After a long time we come to the dogs. They lie huddled on the snow, their harness of blanket and canvas on them, the sled behind them. [illegible] we [illegible] them they whine to us and cry like babies that are hungry.

"The man who is before us leave our dogs and go on alone across the snow. The man and the woman are nearly gone, and they [illegible] and [illegible] and fall. But the [illegible] I keep [illegible] I have but the one thought. It is to come up to the strange man. Then, it is that I shall rest, and not until then shall I rest,

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and it seem that I must be dead when I sleep for a thousand years. I am so tired.

"The strongest man is fifty yards away, all alone in the white snow. He falls and crawls, staggers, and falls and crawls again. By and by he crawls on hands and knees. He no longer stands up. And the woman and man no longer stand up. They, too, crawl after him on hands and knees. But I stand up. Sometimes I fall, but always do I stand up again.

"On either side the sun are sun dogs, so that there are three suns in the sky.

"After a long time the strongest man crawls no more. He stands slowly upon his feet and rocks back and forth. Also does he take off one mitten and wait with revolver in his hand, rocking back and forth as he waits. His face is skin and bones, and frozen black. It is a hungry face. The eyes are deep sunk in his head, and the lips are shrunken. The man and woman, too, get upon their feet, and they go toward him very slowly. And all about is the snow and the silence. And in the sky are three suns, and all the air is thrilling with the dust of diamonds.

"And this it was that I, Sitka Charley, saw the baby wolves make their kill. No word is spoken. Only does the stranger man snarl with his hungry face. Also does he rock to and fro, his shoulders drooping, his knees bent, and his legs wide apart so that he does not fall down. The man and the woman stop maybe fifty feet away. Their legs, too, are wide apart so that they do not fall down, and their bodies rock to and fro. The stranger man is very weak. His arm shakes, so that when he shoots at the man his bullet [illegible] take off his mitten. The stranger man [illegible] and he cannot hold the revolver, and [illegible] shoot, quick, just like that. The [illegible] snow.

"They did not look at the dead man. 'Let us go on,' they said. 'And we will go on.' But now that they have found the [illegible] for which they look, they are like dead. The last strength has gone out of them. They can stand no more upon their feet. They will not crawl, but desire only to close their eyes and sleep. I see not far away a place for camp. I kick them. I have my dog-whip, and I give them the lash of it. They cry aloud, but they must crawl. And they do crawl to the place for camp. I build fire so that they will not freeze. Then I go back for sled. Also, I kill the dogs of the stranger man so that we may have food and not die. I put the man and woman in blankets and they sleep. Sometimes I wake them up and give them little bits of food. They are not awake, but they take the food. The woman sleep one day and a half. Then she wake up and go to sleep again. The man sleep two days and wake up and go to sleep again. After that we go down to the coast to St. Michaels. And when the ice goes out of Bering Sea the man and woman go away on a steamship. But first they pay me my seven hundred and fifty dollars a month."

"But why did they kill the man?" I asked.

Sitka Charley delayed reply until he had lighted his pipe. He glanced at the illustration on the wall and nodded his head at it familiarly. Then he said, speaking slowly and pondering:

"I have thought much. I do not know. It is something that happened. It is a picture I remember. It is like looking out the window and seeing the man writing a letter. They came into my life and they went out of my life, and the picture is, as I have said, without beginning, the end without understanding."

"You have painted many pictures in the telling," I said.

"Ay,"—he nodded his head. "But they were without beginning and without end."

"The last picture of all had an end," I said.

"Ay," he answered. "But what end?"

"It was a piece of life," I said.

"Ay," he answered. "It was a piece of life.

EVERY SWEATSHOP HAS A SILVER LINING

Happiness is a PBS documentary on New York

By Lee Siegel

Discussed in this essay:

New York: A Documentary Film, by Ric Burns, aired November 14–15 on PBS

Ever since an advertising campaign created the "Big Apple" image for a crime-ridden, economically distressed New York City in the early 1970's, New Yorkers' self-celebration, always a popular local activity, has begun to compete with their sense of the city as an actual place. Filmmaker Ric Burns appreciates this complacent trend as well as anybody, and his latest project, *New York: A Documentary Film*, serves as a study in the way that the supposedly "liberal media" turn a mild contempt for moral values into an occasion for affirming them. Promoted with the customary tantara and aired by PBS last November, the first five two-hour installments of Burns's nine-part film trace the city's history from the establishment of the colony by the Dutch West India Company in 1624 to the present. Burns's presentation of the city's past is designed to portray the present as the fulfillment of the city's destiny. Burns's film is not merely pining for the illusory grandeur of a time when history seemed to have been perfectly shaped, with a reassuring beginning, middle, and end. The Burns brothers' overall project is to portray the past that was the consummation of our hopes for the present, to portray history as a triumphant and dramatic and fulfilling past were proof of a grand and dramatic and fulfilling present and future. In this way, they actually make us feel that such a future is already behind us. They make us feel that there has never been a better present than ours.



The film's thematic framework appears to have no truck with the many-faceted myth of the city you can make it here, you can make it anywhere. City That Never Sleeps, Burns's theme about New York seems to draw on the long-unsentimental view of urban life. The idea is encapsulated over the five episodes that the narrator, David Ogden Stiers, puts in the series' opening minute: New York was "a city in motion from the very start." Each day, Edwin moved the Dutch cabin on the Lower East Side, where he relished his first ever ice cream cone, and Ric put it more happily. And the motion is pursued throughout the series, repeated scene and theme from one century to the next, from one historical incident to the next. At one point, Kenneth Jackson, the editor of the *Encyclopedia of New York City* and one of the film's chief experts, informs us that Wall Street represented "for the first time in the American history, [an] investment that's just business."

Lee Siegel is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. *His review of the Oliver Stone film* Wide Slice *appeared in the October issue.*

Mayor Jimmy Walker, gets referred to as "Boss Tweed" in a nanosecond, and there's a history of New York that does not even comment on the myth of Broadway. There's no mention of the momentous 1840 Astor Place riots, which exposed New York's class divisions *for the first time*; no mention of Chinatown or Little Italy in an attempt to explain how Greenwich Village came to be a bohemian sanctuary. The Harlem Renaissance gets about seven eclectic minutes, and we keep getting more and more Fitzgerald throughout, when Langston Hughes or Zora Neale Hurston would have been more illuminating. Most astonishingly, while Burns spends nearly half an episode on Central Park, whose designers wished to impose order on nature, he ignores Times Square, which has always offered to human nature an outlet under the veneer of order. Times Square has been a signpost of idiosyncrasy, of individuality, a place that might lead you into the heart of the city's most potent promise: escape and reinvention and assertion of singular identity. That omission is a path into Burns's sensibility.

A great city, in proportion to its man-made intensity, resembles a state of nature. Because of its countless possibilities and its principle of unpredictability, and the careers it offers to individual appetites, a great city makes the eternal contingencies of existence more naked than they could be in any other kind of place. The urban style is not rude, it is rudimentary. For this reason, it is hard to cope with life in a great city without becoming either sentimental or abstract.

When you look at a city with the uncommon intensity that Burns does, you see the same essential dynamic in each of its neighborhoods: a struggle to thrive. A city is the total human environment, the ultimate human habitat. Writing in these pages almost a century ago, Henry James imagined America, through his experience of New York, as a romantic hero whose every step was made despite the forces ranged against [illegible] against the weight of environment. And the more multiplicity of experience in a city, the more variety of people, the more elastic this personal idiosyncrasy will be. Changing, fluxing, teeming, bursting, various, multitudinous New York, therefore, is the world center of individuation. Except through the testimony of personal experience, it is impossible to describe what New York really is.

You will not find New York if you are content with looking for it as a place. Its streets and storefronts and skyline are literally hammered into new shapes by the hearts and minds and shoulders and hands of the people who come to live in the city. It is the most plastic city in the world (let me choose my own superlatives). Nor will you get New York if you drone on about its energy, its creativity, etc., etc. On the contrary. The nature of the city resides in the way each person develops his or her own anti-city preservatives as a way to resist New York's masticating dynamism. The fatal deficiency of Burns's documentary is that he uses only celebrated figures to tell the story of New York's endlessly changing nature. But he also should have used ordinary men and women to tell how they build stable lives in the midst of the city's daily transformations. Instead, he presents the novelist Caleb Carr instructing us in the lesson of Alexander Hamilton. Describing how Hamilton came to New York and soared to fame from lowly origins, Carr exclaims that this is "so typically New York." No, thinking that this is typically New York is a typically New York delusion, which has helped make Gotham the psychiatric capital of the world. People come to this sometimes inhuman place to get a more decent job, to find a more fitting compartment, to be better understood, to make more money, to be more themselves, to find enlargement and expansion, to search for their deeper niche of humanness. Whitman loved the opera *Ernani*, in which the lovers get everything they desire but at the cost of their lives. Burns, however, is not interested in failure of any sort.

You will not find cabdrivers talking in this film, or short-order cooks or bartenders, or stockbrokers, or bellhops, or prostitutes, or lawyers, or drag queens, or immigrants (Whitman, the sublime cataloguer of the city's myriad humanity, would not recognize the role he plays here). Perhaps this lack of interest in the small, stable, sustaining particulars that make up a life is also why Burns is so indifferent to artistic expression. The art made in New York, though it certainly draws from the city's kinetic nature, is a mode of withstanding it, and this style of enduring the city even as you borrow its energies is the true urban mode. Against the city's assault on the eye, on the ear, the painters have slowed the eye down—abstract expressionism, born in the city, requires the utmost patience to view it—and the composers, even the wildest jazz musicians, have lured the ear into careful attention. Against all the ocular and auditory commotion, the written language—above all, language—has held the urban psyche fast.

Burns, though, is a master of television. And the interesting thing about television is that it has detached the urban experience from the urban sensibility. Television assaults the eye and the ear, it is a perpetual tumult flung into the senses. You can have this urban experience in the smallest, sleepiest town simply by pressing a button (the importation of urban mental life into an otherwise slow suburban or rural life is a profoundly consequential social and political fact that no one has attended to). From *New York: A Documentary Film* you get incessant throbbing music, ceaseless narration, streaming images—all happening at the very same moment. You lose New Yorkers' mode of withstanding all this manic instantaneity; you lose the ligaments of individuality. And in this void Ric Burns has erected a new place for our frenzied, static, decentered time. With PBS as his loyal and compliant vehicle, he has created the city as celebrity; he has conjured up New York as a place of "dynamism" and "energy" and "creativity." But there are no people in it. ■

CONNUBIAL ABYSS

The mysterious narrative of marriage

By *Kathryn Harrison*



Discussed in this essay:

Elegy for Iris, by John Bayley. St. Martin's Press, 1999. 275 pages. $22.95.

Birthday Letters, by Ted Hughes. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998. 198 pages. $20.

Intimacy, by Hanif Kureishi. Scribner, 1998. 118 pages. $16.

Parallel Lives: Five Victorian Marriages, by Phyllis Rose. Random House, 1984. 318 pages. $12.

Vera (Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov), by Stacy Schiff. Random House, 1999. 456 pages. $27.95.

So marriage has persisted, now, for yet another thousand years, shedding its skins, dowries giving way to prenups, vows to wishes, virginity to "virginity." Even as our nation's First Marriage apparently foundered, gay men and women lobbied for the privilege of betrothal, the legal binding of two souls together into what is still termed a sacrament but is more often understood as a lifestyle option. What is this marriage? What drives it? Love? Pragmatism? Or simply a failure of imagination?

If marriage is "a narrative construct," as Phyllis Rose defines it in her introduction to *Parallel Lives*—an analysis of five literary marriages, including those of Dickens and George Eliot—a "subjectivist fiction with two points of view often deeply in conflict, sometimes torturously congruent," then it is necessarily influenced by a narrative tradition, the only permutation being the romance. Boy loves girl; girl loves boy; boy and girl transcend obstacles to that love. "The plots we choose to impose on our own lives are limited and limiting. And in no one are the colonial and sterile ... myths of love and marriage. Nothing else better serves to ... our imaginations, we will filter our experience through the romantic cliches ... a betrayal of our inner richness and complexity ..."

But is this universally true? Even if we have my inner richness and complexity, aren't we capable of using such plots rather than being used by them—understanding that the romance bears as little resemblance to our own stories as do the plastic bride and groom on my cake? [illegible]

After all, the romance is a form that, like the fairy tale, tends to draw a "happily ever after" curtain [illegible] the end. The marriage plot (its most recent, and recently vilified, popular exemplar being Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary*) contains all that happens up until the wedding and nothing after. And although many novels and movies mimic [illegible] by means of adulteress or infidelity, what precedes the breakdown goes unreported, secondary to the invariable words "happily ever after."

However much, what we were, the necessary now, the meal we ate—all the [illegible] of a myth manufactured for our children, our parents, our friends. They don't betray the rich and complex truth but protect it

Kathryn Harrison is the author of the novels Thicker Than Water *and* Exposure. The Kiss, *Harrison's memoir of her affair with her father, and* The Binding Chair, or A Visit from the Foot Emancipation Society, *will be published in May. Her last piece for* Harper's Magazine, *"What Remains," appeared in the December 1995 issue.*

that allows us privacy.

appeared, wearing a black satin mask.

querade ball Vladimir had recently attended. Or, Schiff wonders, "Vladimir made the mask," Vladimir wrote to Véra eight months later.

For biographers the Nabokovs consider one Nabokov without the their marriage, obscuring its real features from all who might want to map themselves. To reporters, fans, biographers, Véra presented herself as not only the artist's mate but as his secretary, agent, and interpreter. Although she denied any substantive contribution, she was often the question of Nabokov scholars: Just that the genius was really his, all his. Unless it was—was it? hers as well. romantic fan-

tasy in which the two displaced America or Switzerland, they lived land where sentiment, especially romantic feeling, is punished. Consider Emma's poor Mrs. Hazel Lorraine. Undone by emotion, she runs into the path of a car, leaving her daughter for Humbert.

Narrative is made from the rubble of experience, a necessarily retrospective process of assembling those details that contribute to the chosen story, discarding others, equally true, that might resolve into another picture. As the controller of information about her marriage, Véra Nabokov deliberately disseminated certain details. She conceived the narrative (outlined it, anyway); the grunt work of assemblage she left to biographers, some more inclined than others to succumb to the romance. As Rose warns, "Easy stories drive out hard ones. Simple paradigms prevail over complicated ones."

Much of marriage's burden is the contemplation of death and its partner, existential aloneness

Romance: We learn and relearn its catechism from novels such as *The Bridges of Madison County*, movies such as *The Bridges of Madison County*, stories in which Love outlives lovers, its divinity proved by immortality. Consider the couples we cherish. Think, for example, of Vronsky and Anna Karenina, Cable and Lombard, Orpheus and Eurydice, Lancelot and Guinevere, JFK and Jackie, Tristan and Isolde, Humbert and Lolita, Pinkerton and Madame Butterfly, Tracy and Hepburn, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Romeo and Juliet. Married or happy or not, unfaithful or not, still, in our conception, our mythmaking, these pairs are eternally bound. The narratives we collectively invent for historical figures ignore the lawful claims of a spouse, the distraction of adultery, the right and obligation of kings. As storytellers, we make life incidental to Love.

Once the lovers must die, either completely or in significant measure. Because the consummation of Romantic Love isn't marriage, it is death. How unsatisfying it would be if Anna never jumped in front of the tram, if Edward VIII hadn't died as a king to be reborn as a commoner, if any of these loves had cooled and become reasonable.

> To confuse romance with marriage, to take the mask for the face, is to betray not an inner richness but an infantile wish for total immersion into the other, for escape from adulthood by means of a backward journey whose ultimate destination is the womb and hence nothingness, pre-life. Romance sets its face toward the past, toward a non-being quite opposite from the kind of nothingness we anticipate in reality. Marriage is a far more complex collaboration than that of romance; a great portion of the burden of marriage is a forward-looking consciousness, the contemplation of death and of its partner, existential aloneness.

John Bayley's *Elegy for Iris*, a memoir justly praised for its wisdom and gentility, is a calm rumination on the "sympathy in apartness" Bayley found with Iris Murdoch, his wife of more than forty years. What might at first seem the author's dispassionate resignation to mortal disappointment unfolds to reveal an evolved consciousness. Reminiscing about his honeymoon, Bayley describes a leisurely afternoon in an Italian café, the newlyweds' table attended by a man they privately named Kafka, both for his physical resemblance to the writer and for the tragic cast of his features. Their waiter's apparent misery, the sadness of "an unknown life," disturbed Bayley, who turned to consider the woman to whom he had pledged himself:

> has settled back in a reverie [illegible] and pressed mine. What was she thinking? I had no idea, and more than I had in the case of Kafka, and I knew very well there was no way to find out. But this realization reassured me deeply: it made me a

happy is the hypothetical woes of Kat Kavanagh made me feel sad. 'Such ignorance, such solitude.' They suddenly seemed the best part of love and marriage. We were together because we were comforted and reassured by the solitariness each saw and was aware of in the other.

'So married life began," Bayley tells us . . .

> And the joys of solitude. No contradiction was involved. The one went perfectly with the other. To feel one's self held and cherished and accompanied, and yet to be alone. To be closely and physically entwined, and yet feel solitude's friendly presence, as warm and undesolating as contiguity itself.

Such ignorance, such solitude . . . the best part of love and marriage.

Before an audience of potential lovers and partners, whether conventional or not, heterosexual or not, to invoke ignorance and solitude as the better part of love seems less subversive than opaque. But if not the best part of marriage then certainly a part of the best marriages, the ignorance Bayley invokes is what saves us from the knowledge that destroys one partner's integrity, from the knowledge that refuses to allow boundaries to exist between lovers. Of course a husband cannot know his wife's private, secret self, nor she his. If, like one of Bluebeard's wives, she insists upon breaking into the secret room of his soul, she will be dismembered by the primal rage and appetite she finds there.

Which is not to say that a wife's core is less dark and bestial. Consider one of the poems from Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters*, a collection that might have been titled *Elegy for Sylvia:*

> The mahogany table-top you smashed
> Had been the bread plank-top
> Of my mother's heirloom sideboard—
> Mapped with the scars of my whole life.
>
> That came under the hammer.
> The high stool you swung that day
> Demented by my being
> Twenty minutes late to baby-minding.



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time I like it. I keep my pictures of Jessamyn when we were kept in the dark by the separate and secret pride they take in just the way I hate to be pried deep knowledge.

What a frightened and childish once this is. Yes, the shutter is an tional object, and the transition ckward and inward, evokes the rst skirt that kept the world at w the primal Ur-skirt of Mother. nteresting, the entire concept of *timacy* implies the protection of a ge mother's clothing: the identi es of Jay and Hanif Kureishi are blurred that the copy line "a ovel" is the book's only pure fic on. To read it is to picture a child ho turns his face into his tall other's skirts (skirts as limitless nd encompassing as a world) and ssumes he is hidden, while half nowing, really, that he can't be. *ntimacy* is distressing not so much or the familiar story of family rup ure as for its sobering close-up of he vicious Moebius-strip logic that hreatens to consume all that's left f Jay's life. Approaching middle ge, cataloging the deterioration of is flesh, he insists on his right to rrested time, of "no past," and thus o responsibility, no future, no leath. "I am not ready for the wis dom of misery," he says. "I have ad that with Mother," the one woman he cannot escape.

What we've all had with Mother are undrawn boundaries, individuality hat is, as yet, unrealized. We began not knowing where we left off and he loved one began; our flesh was ne, and this absolute togetherness till has the power both to compel nd to terrify. How we value our sep rateness, our distinct identity, our ntegrity, and yet how we long to ast it off. Remembering an Eden of uickly gratified desire and no re sponsibility, we worship unattain ble, self-annihilating love, a union hat makes one flesh of two.

In *Sex on the Brain: The Biological Differences between Men and Women*, Deborah Blum tells us that "early gene transfer essentially involved bacteria melting into each other, with one sucking up the other . . . the union of two different genetic packages . . . the difference between sex." In practice, this is vastly more complicated, and scientists are not certain whether there are two primary genders or three. Under the microscope, the sperm and the egg look nothing alike, and yet they must be joined in order to create a fully human. Beyond the question of higher life forms, the point Shakespeare makes in one after another love sonnet is that a rose is not only a rose, only smell so achingly sweet to the one who knows that someday they will no longer smell, touch and to every other joy and sorrow. His essay "Antistrophe's Psalm" by the poet Mark Doty examines a new relationship even as it recalls the death of his longtime companion:

> Sometimes I look at you and I see the child you were, the boy who was first taught to be ashamed of his body, and I want to say to him, Don't worry, it's going to be all right, you're going to grow up and find someone who loves you, and you'll be happy. Meaning, I suppose, I wish I could be more certain that I've been a good parent. Meaning, I suppose, I wish I could protect you from the inevitable fact of death.

In *Lessons of Paradise*, the one novel by Penelope Lively to which Bayley reports she has not been married, the narrator, Mattie, returns to the nursing home where, he knows, she would soon die. "But it needed more than that we had put ourselves right, or as if we were just going to get married and were getting the blood tests together to the registrar's satisfaction," Mattie's mother tells him. Marriage is made from the start, between two people who are willing to contemplate death together, to have and to hold, until death do them part. Such contemplation is possible only between those who understand and embrace the boundaries of a life, both temporal and existential.

What is identity without the integrity of a personality, a separateness, whatever might be held inside the moat that keeps out all enemy trespassers, including other people? Would you love anyone with whom to fall in love if there weren't the moat and what it protects? Bayley says of Iris Murdoch that "the question of sexuality had never presented itself to her as a problem." Murdoch herself hardly possessed such a [illegible] what it was like to be one, it was [illegible] other people's [illegible] opposite, opposite, indistinguishable. [illegible] to any other human being, death, the fact that we are, that we cannot be, that we only are, is unbearable. We must believe that someone else will love us, or we will die. We must believe that someone else will love us, or we will die. Hindu mourning in the beginning when we know we'll live [illegible] remarriage immediately is [illegible] Until and unless perfect mates, the twain of Bayley's lover, be pictured as mathematically different:

> Alone
> [illegible]
> life
> [illegible]
> You are only [illegible] other
> [illegible] was the only
> [illegible] the other

It's hard to imagine that Murdoch, philosopher and novelist, author of such fierce and intellectual books, each unmistakably her own, might have had a sense of identity. And in fact Bayley doesn't believe she had. He points [illegible] the report that "the deathbed moment of what was for her an extremely gruesome existence" emerges not as a registrar's mistake, decided with a pawn-shop ring, but when he found her self "lumped among a lot of Mrs. Bayleys." A person without attachment [illegible] identity wouldn't [illegible] to the common [illegible] human community with [illegible] and [illegible] law.

In her own words, from the novel *[illegible] Angels*, which [illegible] bread, I pried eye on the [illegible] romance:

> I need you so much. I love you. You're the only being whom I can love absolutely with my complete self, [illegible] my whole body and mind and heart. You're my mate, my perfect partner, [illegible] one. You and I belong to each [illegible] we were the perfect [illegible] of [illegible] was [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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February Index Sources

THE PAPERHANGER

By William Gay



The vanishing of the doctor's wife's child in broad daylight was an event so cataclysmic that it forever divided time into the then and the now, the before and the after. In later years, fortified with a pitcher of stiletto dry vodka martinis, she had cause to replay the events preceding the disappearance. They were tawdry and banal but in retrospect freighted with menace, a foreshadowing of what was to come, like a footman or a fool preceding a king into a room.

She had been quarreling with the paperhanger. Her four-year-old daughter, Zeineb, was standing directly behind the paperhanger where he knelt smoothing air bubbles out with a wide plastic trowel. Zeineb had her fingers in the paperhanger's hair. The paperhanger's hair was shoulder-length and the color of flax and the child was delighted with it. The paperhanger was accustomed to her doing this and he did not even turn around. He just went on with his work. His arms were smooth and brown and corded with muscle and in the light that fell upon the paperhanger through stained-glass panels the doctor's wife could see that they were lightly feathered with fine golden hair. She studied these arms bemusedly while she formulated her thoughts.

You tell me so much a roll, she said. The doctor's wife was from Pakistan and her speech was still heavily accented. I do not know single-bolt rolls and double-bolt rolls. You tell me double-bolt price but you are installing single-bolt rolls. My friend has told me. It is cost me perhaps twice as much.

The paperhanger, still on his knees, turned. He smiled up at her. He had pale blue eyes. I did tell you so much a roll, he said. You bought the rolls.

The child, not yet vanished, was watching the paperhanger's eyes. She was a scaled down clone of the mother, the mother viewed through the wrong end of a telescope, and the paperhanger suspected that as she grew neither her features nor her expression would alter, she would just grow larger, like something being aired up with a hand pump.

And you are leave lumps, the doctor's wife said, gesturing at the wall.

I do not leave lumps, the paper-

William Gay is an author of the novel The Long Home *and* Provinces of Night, *which will be published by Doubleday in August. He lives in Tennessee.*

hanger said. You've seen my work [illegible]. They're not lumpy. They're perfect. The paper will [illegible]. Every thing will shrink down and flatten out. He smiled again. He had clean even teeth. And besides, he said, I gave you my special cocksteaser rate. I don't know what you're complaining about.

Her mouth worked convulsively. She looked at him a moment as if he'd slapped her. When words did come they came in a fine spray of spit. You are trash, she said. You are scum.

Hands on knees, he was pushing erect, the girl's dark fingers trailing out of his hair. Don't call me trash, he said, as if it were perfectly all right to call him scum, but he was already talking to her back. She had whirled on her heels and went twisting her hips through an arched doorway into the cathedraled living room. The paperhanger looked down at the child. Her face glowed with a strained concentration, as if she and the paperhanger shared some secret the rest of the world hadn't caught on to yet.

In the living room the builder was supervising the installation of a chandelier that depended from the vaulted ceiling by a long golden chain. The builder was a short bearded man dancing about, showing her the features of the chandelier, rubbing it quickly. She gave him a flat angry look. She waved a dismissive hand toward the ceiling. Whatever, she said.

She went out the front door onto the porch and down a makeshift walkway of two-by-tens into the front yard where her car was parked. The car was a silver-gray Mercedes her husband had given her for their anniversary. When he cranked the engine its idle was scarcely perceptible.

She powered down the window. Zeineb, she called. Across the razed earth of the unlandscaped yard a man in a [illegible] turned. He hurried [illegible] the car. [illegible] looked [illegible] and [illegible]. He was low in the west and bloodred behind him. A [illegible] and man and tractor looked [illegible] [illegible] something [illegible] stopped [illegible]. She [illegible] the [illegible]. The man turned raised an arm as if she'd signaled him.

Zeineb, she called again.

She got out of the car and turned impatiently up the walkway. Behind her the gravel truck started and truck and backhoe pulled out of the drive and down toward the road.

The paperhanger was stowing away his T square and trowel in his wooden toolbox. Where is Zeineb? the doctor's wife asked. She followed you out, the paperhanger told her. He glanced about, as if the girl might be hiding somewhere. There was nowhere to hide.

Where is my child? she asked the builder. The electrician climbed down from the ladder. The paperhanger came out of the bathroom with his tools. The builder was looking all around. His elfin features were touched with chagrin, as if this missing child were just something else he was going to be held accountable for.

Likely she's hiding in a closet, the paperhanger said. Playing a trick on you.

Zeineb does not play tricks, the doctor's wife said. Her eyes kept darting about the huge room, the shadows that lurked in corners. There was already an undercurrent of panic in her voice and all her poise and self-confidence seemed to have vanished with the child.

The paperhanger set down his toolbox and went through the house, opening and closing doors. It was a huge house and there were a lot of closets. There was no child in any of them.

The electrician was searching upstairs. The builder had gone through the French doors that opened onto the unfinished verandah and was peering into the back yard. The back yard was a maze of convoluted ditch excavated for the septic tank field line and beyond that there was just woods. She's playing in that ditch, the builder said, coming down the flagstone steps.

She wasn't, though. She wasn't anywhere. They searched the house and ground. They moved with jerky haste. They kept glancing toward the woods where the day was already first. The builder kept shaking his head. She's got to be *somewhere*, he said.

Call someone, the doctor's wife said. Call the police.

It's a little early for the police, the builder said. She's got to be here.

You call them anyway. I have a phone in my car. I will call my husband.

While she called, the paperhanger and the electrician continued to search. They had looked everywhere and were forced to search places they'd already looked. It was [illegible] the goddamnedest thing I ever saw, the electrician said.

The doctor's wife got out of the Mercedes and slammed the door. Suddenly she stopped and clasped a hand to her forehead. She screamed. The man with the tractor, she cried. Somehow my child is gone with the tractor man.

Oh Jesus, the builder said. What have we got ourselves into here?

The high sheriff that year was a ruminative man named Bellwether. He stood beside the county cruiser talking to the paperhanger while deputies ranged the grounds. Other men were inside looking in places that had already been searched numberless times. Bellwether had been in the woods and he was picking cocklebirs off his khakis and out of his socks. He was watching the woods where dark was gathering and seeping across the field like a stain.

I've got to get men out here, Bellwether said. A lot of men and a lot of lights. We're going to have to search every inch of these woods.

You'll play hell doing it, the paperhanger said. These woods stretch all the way to Lawrence County. This is the edge of the Hannikan. Down in there's where all those old mines used to be. Allens Creek.

I don't give a shit if they stretch all the way to Fairbanks, Alaska, Bellwether said. They've got to be searched. It'll just take a lot of men.

The raw earth yard was full of cars. Doctor Jamihl had come in a sleek black Lexus. He berated his wife. Why weren't you watching her, he asked. Unlike his wife's, the doctor's speech was impeccable. She

covered her face with her palms and wept. The doctor still wore his green surgeon's smock and it was flecked with bright dots of blood as a butcher's smock might be.

I need to feed a few cows, the paperhanger said. I'll feed my stock pretty quick and come back and help hunt.

You don't mind if I look in your truck, do you?

Do what?

I've got to cover my ass. If that little girl don't turn up damn quick this is going to be over my head. FBI, CBI, network news. I've got to eliminate everything.

Eliminate away, the paperhanger said.

The sheriff searched the floorboard of the paperhanger's pickup truck. He shined his huge flashlight under the seat and felt behind it with his hands.

I had to look, he said apologetically.

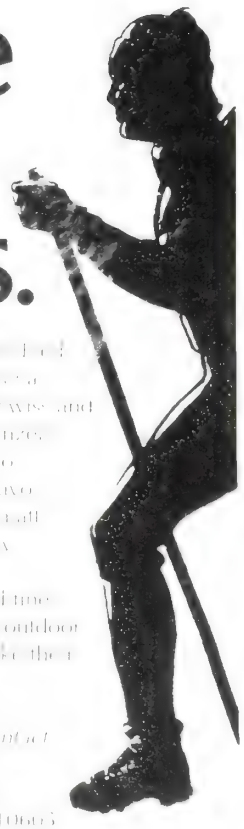
Of course you did, the paperhanger said.

Full dark had fallen before he returned. He had fed his cattle and stowed away his tools and picked up a six-pack of San Miguel beer and he sat in the back of the pickup truck drinking it. The paperhanger had been in the Navy and stationed in the Philippines and San Miguel was the only beer he could drink. He had to go out of town to buy it, but he figured it was worth it. He liked the exotic labels, the dark bitter taste on the back of his tongue, the way the chilled bottles felt held against his forehead.

A motley crowd of curiosity seekers and searchers thronged the yard. There was a vaguely festive air. He watched all this with a dispassionate eye, as if he were charged with grading the participants, comparing this with other spectacles he'd seen. Coffee urns had been brought in and set up on tables, sandwiches prepared and handed out to the weary searchers. A crane had been hauled in and the septic tank reclaimed from the ground. It swayed from a taut cable while men with lights searched the impacted earth beneath it for a child, for the very trace of a child. Through the fog-like lights crossed and recrossed, darted to and fro like fireflies. The doctor and the doctor's wife sat in folding camp chairs, locked in disbelief, stunned, waiting for their child to be delivered into their arms.

The doctor was a short portly man with a benevolent expression. He had a moon-shaped face, with light and dark areas of skin that looked swirled, as if the pigment coloring him had not been properly mixed. He had been educated at Princeton. When he had established his practice he had returned to Pakistan to find a wife befitting his station. The woman he had selected had been chosen on the basis of her beauty. In retrospect, perhaps more consideration should have been given to other qualities. She was still beautiful but he was thinking that certain faults might outweigh this. She seemed to have trouble keeping up with her children. She could lose a four-year-old child in a room no larger than six hundred square feet and she could not find it again.

The paperhanger drained his bottle and set it by his foot in the bed of the truck. He studied the doctor's wife's ravaged face through the deep blue light. The first time he had seen her she had hired him to paint a bedroom in the house they were living in while the doctor's mansion was being built. There was an arrogance about her that cried out to be taken down a notch or two. She flirted with him, backed away, flirted again. She would treat him as if he were a stain on the bathroom rug and then stand close by him while he worked until he was dizzy with the smell of her, with the heat that seemed to radiate off her body. She stood by him while he knelt painting baseboards and after an infinite moment leaned carefully the weight of a thigh against his shoulder. You'd better move it, he thought. She didn't. He laughed and turned his face into her groin. She gave a strangled cry and slapped him hard. The paintbrush flew away and speckled the dark rose walls with antique white. You filthy beast, she said. You are some kind of monster. She stormed out of the room and he could hear her slamming doors behind her.



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Well, I was [illegible] me for a role when I found that page. He smiled philosophically to himself.

But he [illegible] In fact now he had been hired again. Perhaps there was something here to ponder.

At midnight he gave up his vigil. Some [illegible] than his kept up the night. The earth here was worn smooth by the useless traffic of the searchers. Driving out, he met a [illegible] pickup trucks with civil defense signs. Grim-faced men sat aligned in their beds. Some clutched rifles loosely by their barrels, as if they would lay to waste whatever monster, man or beast, would snatch up a child in its slaverous jaws and vanish, prey and predator, in the space between two heartbeats.

Even more dubious reminders of civilization as these fell away. He drove into the Hartham, where he lived. A world so dark and forlorn light itself seemed at a premium. Whippoorwills swept red-eyed up from the roadside. Old abandoned foundries and furnaces rolled past, grim and dark as forsaken prisons. Down a rutted lane was an abandoned graveyard, if you knew where to look. The paperhanger did. He had dug up a few of the graves, examined with curiosity what remained. Buttons, belt buckles, a cameo brooch. The bones he laid out like a child with a Chinese toy, it amused them the way they went in jury-rigged resurrection.

He [illegible] a curve, the truck skewing in the gravel. A bolt of [illegible] the road graceful as a wraith, fierce and lanterneyed in the headlights, gone so swiftly it might have been a stag [illegible] the road ahead.

Bellwether and a deputy drove to the backhoe operator's house. He lived up a gravel road that wound through a great stand of cedars. He lived in a board-and-batten house with a tin roof rusted to a warm umber. They parked before it and got [illegible] and left.

Bellwether had a search warrant [illegible] The operator was outraged.

Look at it this way, Bellwether explained patiently. I've got to cover my ass. Everything has got to be considered. You know how kids are. Never thinking. What if she run under the wheels of your truck when you was backing out? What if quicklike you put the body in your truck to get rid of somewhere?

What if quicklike you get the hell off my property, the operator said.

Everything has to be considered, the sheriff said again. Nobody's accusing anybody of anything just yet.

The operator's wife stood glowering at them. To have something to do with his hands, the operator began to construct a cigarette. He had huge red hands thickly sown with brown freckles. They trembled. I ain't got a thing in this round world to hide, he said.

Bellwether and his men searched everywhere they could think of to look. Finally they stood uncertainly in the operator's yard, out of place in their neat khakis, their polished leather.

Now get the hell off my land, the operator said. If all you think of me is that I could run over a little kid and then throw it off in the bushes like a dead cat or something then I don't even want to see your goddamn face. I want you gone and I want you by God gone now.

Everything had to be considered, the sheriff said.

Then maybe you need to consider that paperhanger.

What about him?

That paperhanger is one sick puppy.

He was still there when I got there, the sheriff said. Three witnesses swore nobody ever left, not even for a minute, and one of them was the child's mother. I searched his truck myself.

Then he's a sick puppy with a damn good alibi, the operator said.

That was all. There was no ransom note, no child that turned up two counties over with amnesia. She was a page turned, a door closed, a lost ball in the high weeds. She was a child no larger than a doll, but the [illegible] she left behind her was unreckonable. Yet there was no end to it. No finality. There was no moment when someone could say, turning from a mounded grave, Well, that has been unbearable, but you've got to go on with your life. Life did not go on.

At the doctor's wife's insistence an intensive investigation was focused on the backhoe operator. Forensic experts from the FBI examined every millimeter of the grave, truck, paying special attention to its wheels. They were examined with every modern crime-fighting device the government possessed, and there was not a microscopic particle of tissue or blood, no telltale chip of fingernail, no hair ribbon.

Work ceased on the mansion. Some subcontractors were discharged outright, while others simply drifted away. There was no one to care if the work was done, no one to pay them. The half-finished veranda's raw wood grayed in the fall, then winter, rains. The ditches were left fallow and uncovered and half filled with water. Kudzu crept from the woods. The hollyhocks and oleanders the doctor's wife had planted grew entangled and rampant. The imported windows were stoned by double-dared boys who whirled and fled. Already this house where a child had vanished was acquiring an unhealthy, diseased reputation.

The doctor and his wife sat entombed in separate prisons replaying real and imagined grievances. The doctor felt that his wife's neglect had sent his child into the abstract. The doctor's wife drank vodka martinis and watched talk shows where she passed an endless procession of vengeful people who had not had children vanish, and felt, perhaps rightly, that the fates had dealt her from the bottom of the deck, and she prayed with intensity for a miracle.

Then one day she was just gone. The Mercedes and part of her clothing and personal possessions were gone too. He idly wondered where she was, but he did not search for her.

Sitting in his armchair cradling a great marmalade cat and a bottle of J&B and observing with bemused detachment the gradations of light

at the window, the doctor remembered studying literature at Princeton. He had particular cause to reconsider the poetry of William Butler Yeats. For how surely things fell apart, how surely the center did not hold.

His practice fell into a ruin. His colleagues made sympathetic allowances for him at first, but there are limits to these things. He made erroneous diagnoses, prescribed the wrong medicines not once or twice but as a matter of course.

Just as there is a deepening progression to misfortune, so too there is a point beyond which things can only get worse. They did. A middle-aged woman he was operating on died.

He had made an incision to remove a ruptured appendix and the incised flesh was clamped aside while he made ready to slice it out. It was not there. He stared in drunken disbelief. He began to search under lungs, organs, intestines, a rising tide of blood. The appendix was not there. It had gone into the abstract, atrophied, been removed twenty-five years before, he had sliced through the selfsame scar. He was rummaging through her abdominal cavity like an irritated man tumbling through a drawer for a clean pair of socks, finally bellowing in rage and wringing his hands in bloody vexation while nurses began to cry out, another surgeon was brought on the run as a closer, and he was carried from the operating room.

Came then days of sitting in the armchair while he was besieged by contingency lawyers, action news teams, a long line of process servers. There was nothing he could do. It was out of his hands and into the hands of the people who are paid to do these things. He sat cradling the bottle of J&B with the marmalade cat snuggled against his portly midriff. He would study the window, where the light drained away in a process he no longer had an understanding of, and sip the scotch and every now and then stroke the cat's head gently. The cat purred against his breast as reassuringly as the hum of an air conditioner.

He left in the middle of the night. He began to load his possessions into the Lexus. At first he did so with a great degree of circumspection. The first time he took Lawrence out custom-made monogrammed salt cloths. Then his stereo receiver, Denon AVC-5, still in the box, a copy of *The Sickness unto Death*, autographed by Ed Fitzgerald that he had bought as an investment. By the time the Lexus was half full he was just grabbing things at random and stuffing them into the back seat, a half-eaten pizza, half a case of cat food, a mink brocade house shoe.

He drove west past the hospital, the country club, the city limits sign. He was thinking no thoughts at all, and all the destination he had was the amount of highway the headlights showed him.

In the slow runs of late fall the doctor's wife returned to the unfurnished mansion. She used to sit in a lawn chair on the fenced verandah and drink chilled martinis she poured from the pitcher she carried in a foam ice chest. Did I tell you these November days? Remember husbandmine some tax-certified called through the smoky autumn air. The sound was fiercely evocative, reminding her of something, but she could not have said what.

She went into the room where she had lost the child. The light was turbine. The birch corner of the room were in keeping. Inkblow but she could see the moonlit children clustered on the child's wallpaper, a spider on the bronze chandelier on a strand of spun glass. Some animal's dried blackened stool curled like a dog comma the floorboards. The silence in the house enormous.

One day she came to and was surprised to find the paper mostly gone. He was sitting on the yellow-rotten wheeler finishing off the last of the scotch. He made to go when he saw her staring, he waved him back. Stay and talk with me, she said.

The paper chamber [illegible] changed. The pale [illegible] Everything was in order but the [illegible] it seemed. But the [illegible] and [illegible] with a strength [illegible]

You have a [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[



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As a child in a wagon turning into the yard and he saw it too. It was just like he took a step in this world and his foot came down in another one. He was never seen again.

She gave him a sad smile. Large and she corrected. You make fun with me.

No. It's true. I have it in a book. I'll show you.

I have a book with dragons times. A book where hobbits live in the middle earth. They are holes. I think most books are holes. Perhaps all books. I have prayed for a miracle but I am not worthy of one. I have prayed for her to come from the dead, then just to find her body. That would be a miracle to me. There are no miracles.

She rose unsteadily, swayed slightly, leaning to take up the cooler. The paperhanger watched her. have to go now, she said. When the rains stop we will search.

Can you drive?

Of course I can drive. I have driv out here.

I mean are you capable of driving now. You seem a little drunk.

I drink to forget but it is no enough, she said. I can drive.

After a while he heard her leave in the Mercedes, the tires spinning in the gravel drive. He lit a cigarette. He sat smoking it, watching the rain string off the roof. He seemed to be waiting for something. Dusk was falling like a shroud, the world going dark and formless the way it had begun. He drank the last of the beer sat holding the bottle, the foam bitter in the back of his mouth. A child touched him. He felt something watching him. He turned. From the corner of the ruined veranda a child was watching him. He stood up. He heard the beer bottle break on the flagstones. The child went sprinting past the hollyhocks toward the brush at the edge of the yard, tiny sepia child with an intent sloe-eyed face real as she had ever been, translucent as winter light through dirty glass.

The doctor's wife's hands were laced loosely about his waist as they came down through a thin stand of sassafras, edging over the ridge where

ghost of a road was, a road more
ssed than seen that faced into
lf acre of tilting stones and tabling
nite tablets. Other graves marked
ly by their declivities in the earth,
k so far beyond the pale even the
gibility of their identities had been
iched away by the weather.

Leaves drifted, huge poplar leaves
ined with amber so golden they
ight have been coin of the realm
r a finer world than this one. He
t the ignition of the four-wheeler
d got off. Past the lowering trees
e sky was a blue of an improbable
tensity, a fierce cobalt blue shot
ough with dense golden light.

She slid off the rear and steadied
rself a moment with a hand on his
m. Where are we? she asked. Why
e we here?

The paperhanger had disengaged
s arm and was strolling among the
avestones reading such inscriptions
were legible, as if he might find
re sear or antecedent in this
oldering earth. The doctor's wife
as retrieving her martinis from the
ggage carrier of the ATV. She
ood looking about uncertainly. A
raven angel with broken wings
ouched on a truncated marble col-
mn like a gargoyle. Its stone eyes
garded her with a blind benignity.

ome of these graves have been rob,
he said.

You can't rob the dead, he said.
hey have nothing left to steal.

It is a sacrilege, she said. It is for-
dden to disturb the dead. You have
one this.

The paperhanger took a cigarette
ack from his pocket and felt it, but
was empty, and he balled it up and
rew it away. The line between
raverobbing and archaeology has al-
ays looked a little blurry to me, he
id. I was studying their culture, try-
ng to get a fix on what their lives
ere like.

She was watching him with a kind
f benumbed horror. Standing hip-
lung and lost like a parody of her
rmer self. Strange and anomalous
n her fashionable but mismatched
othing, as if she'd put on the first
rment that fell to hand. Someday,
e thought, she might rise and wan-
er out into the daylit world wearing
othing at all, the way she had come
into it. With her maimed breasts and the cockeyed hair. She became like a used-up talisman.

You have break the law, she told him.

I got a government grant, the paperhanger said contemptuously.

Why are we here? We are supposed to be searching for my child!

If you're looking for a book the first place to look is the graveyard, he said. If you want a book don't you go to the library?

I am paying you, she said. You are in my employ. I do not want to be here. I want you to do as I say or carry me to my car. If you will not.

Actually, the paperhanger said, I had a story to tell you. About my wife.

He paused, as if leaving a space for her comment, but when she made none he went on. I had a wife. My childhood sweetheart. She became a nurse, went to work in one of these drug rehab places. After she was there a while she got a faraway look in her eyes. Look at me without seeing me. She got in tight with her supervisor. They started having meetings to go to. Conferences. Sometimes just the two of them would confer, generally in a motel. The night I watched them walk into the Holiday Inn in Franklin I decided to kill her. No impetuous spur-of-the-moment thing. I thought it all out and it would be the perfect crime.

The doctor's wife didn't say anything. She just watched him.

A grave is the best place to dispose of a body, the paperhanger said. The grave is its normal destination anyway. I could dig up a grave and then just keep on digging. Save everything carefully. Put my body there and fill in part of the earth, and then restore everything the way it was. The coffin, if any of it was left. The bones and such. A good settling rain and the fall leaves and you're home free. Now that's eternity for you.

Did you kill someone? she breathed. Her voice was barely audible.

Did I or did I not, he said, is for the coroner to decide. You have the powers of a god. You can make me a murderer or just a heartbroken guy whose wife [illegible] him. What I am thinking [illegible] I don't have a wife. I expect the police will [illegible] Lane, my [illegible]

I want to go home. I want to go where my car is.

He was sitting on the [illegible] watching her. [illegible] He might as well have been.

I will tell [illegible] for whatever [illegible] the paperhanger [illegible] Margaret, he was standing in front of her. She had not seen him arise from the headstone or make across the grass, but like a ferny phoenix or a film he was before her, a hand cupping each of her breasts, stubble lowering into her face.

Under the merciless weight of the sun her face was tumid and lecherous. He studied it intently, missing no detail. Fine wrinkles crept from the corners of her eyes and mouth like hairline cracks in porcelain. Crimp were imprinted in her pores on the crepe flesh of her throat. How surely everything had fallen from her beauty, wealth, social position, arrogance. Humanity itself, for by now she seemed scarcely human, he lamented so by the fact that she subjected his hands on her breasts as just one more cross to bear, one more indignity to endure.

How far you've come, the paperhanger said in wonder. I believe you're about down to my level now, don't you?

It does not matter, the doctor's wife said. Electricity no longer means anything that matters.

Slowly and with enormous lassitude her body slumped toward him, and in his exultance it seemed not a motion in itself but simply the completion of one begun long ago with the careful weight of a thigh, a motion that began in one world and completed itself in another one.

From what seemed a great distance he watched her fall toward him, like an angel descending, wings spread, from an infinite height, striking the earth gently, tilting, then reclining itself.

The weight of moonlight tracking across the paperhanger's face awoke him from where he took his rest. Unfocused light through the

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LETTERS

David Bouchier claims [Letters, I conduct] that as a college teacher [in] ... and America he dole[d] out ... and Fs "fairly liberally, and entire[ly] on the basis of merit" then under[mined] "toxic cloud" of lawsuits, abandon[ed] "even the most minimal intellectu[al] standards to work within the sy[s]tem"; and, finally, left education f[or] "more satisfying work."

He then contides that he fee[ls] "sorry for the students, who wast[ed] their time, learned nothing ... whose contempt for their teache[rs] must be as boundless as their co[n]tempt for themselves." But why [be] sorry? To have self-contempt [one] must be self-conscious and introspe[c]tive, and it sounds as if most ... Bouchier's students were vap[id] people incapable of soul-searching ... determining their own inadequacie[s]. Furthermore, it is likely that most ... them were not enrolled to learn t[he] subject matter—they only wanted ... certificate to show that they ha[d] passed the course. The certificat[e] was perceived as a means to a pr[os]perous life, but, really, how frequen[t]ly was a failure in Bouchier's cou[rse] directly attributable for their prese[nt] poverty?

Terrence T. DeShone
Elkhart, Ind.

Apple of My Ire

Although David Cutterson nice[ly] recounts the romance of the app[le] ["In the Kingdom of Apples," Oct[o]ber], he misses one important point. The owners of the 52 million app[le] trees in Washington State manage to do for the apple what Cahoon growers did for the tomato a decade ago: they turned a tasty fru[it] into a perfect-looking, pest-resista[nt] product better suited for storage and shipping than for eating.

There may be some truly excel[lent] apples on some of those 52 mi[llion] trees, but if so, very few of them make it to the markets ... Berkeley.

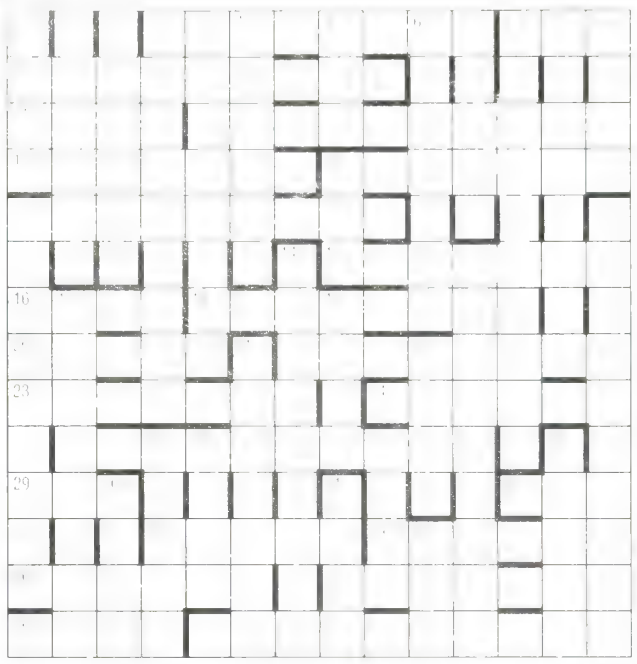
Malcolm M. Feeley
Berkeley, Calif.

Twofers

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
With thanks to "Word Games" by Richard Lederer

Some words give two for the price of one. For example, GENERATION is also GEN ERATION. Twelve such two-part words are clued separately. In these clues, fill the blank with two component words, and the sentence will be complete. Each sentence also includes a (veiled) definition of the single compound answer, which is then to be entered somewhere in the diagram.

The remainder of the clues are normal; answers include three proper names and two common foreign words. As always, mental pronunciation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 94.



ACROSS

a. Leprechauns at times play chess with _____
b. A good writer tries to avoid, in children's _____
c. Accepting a _____ makes a tired pilot cheer
d. Shades of old Ireland: when "Danny Boy" is still cry _____
e. The competitor in the alley, ready to _____ on his out-of-shape opponent
f. Adults often find a _____ messy
g. Having a painful rash, I _____ medicinal sentiments
h. At once, before they _____ his lady with presents
i. _____ usually gets what belongs to them
j. Often a frat boy, if he has to _____ about what inebriates him
k. Former _____ operations are no longer knocking about the C.I.A.
l. The D.A., using wiretap _____ person with filthy old hang-ups?

DOWN

8. Springs back, as an afterthought (3)
10. Disguised hero? Dimmer isn't necessarily (9)
11. Was unfortunate disease caught in the can (4)
12. Kind of square, crude contributors to writers' (7)
13. At the Parthenon, Mars appears in twenty-four hours, I am prepared to believe (7)
15. For the whole family, an old movie queen is pre-sents star quality (7)
16. Showing a little of James Cagney's flair (4)
18. Her certain pique, a tiered log goes over the edge, right (8)
20. What Aussies call a middle-grade ladder-climber (5)
23. Corrosive element reported in the West (4)
24. "Small World" star: I'm from where (6)
29. Female who has us coming and going (5)
32. Say, "That stinks!" more musically (3)
33. Heads of beets topped off in hour but focaccia (5)
34. Vibrates hitting it (6)
36. Conversing and recounts (6)
37. When an elf leaves, turn off west (4)
38. With this, I receive a certain brave (4)

1. Mrs. Leaming, with no [illegible] (4)
2. Tell a mumble-jumble [illegible] (6)
3. Pitting with a contraption [illegible] (8)
4. Yell, I had grown hurt [illegible] (6)
5. [illegible] (5)
6. Request to mill [illegible] (6)
7. Mr. Lard [illegible] (4)
9. Exercising [illegible] (4)
10. Famous Amos partner, along with a fork (4)
13. [illegible] (6)
14. Thummim's remedied many a cause of an allergic [illegible] (9)
17. Corporate leader bull headed, gallant man who [illegible] (8)
19. Dull [illegible] (7)
21. [illegible] (7)
22. [illegible] (4)
25. [illegible] (5)
26. [illegible] (4)
27. [illegible] (5)
28. I'd heard and seen ... (4)
31. [illegible] (4)
35. [illegible] (3)

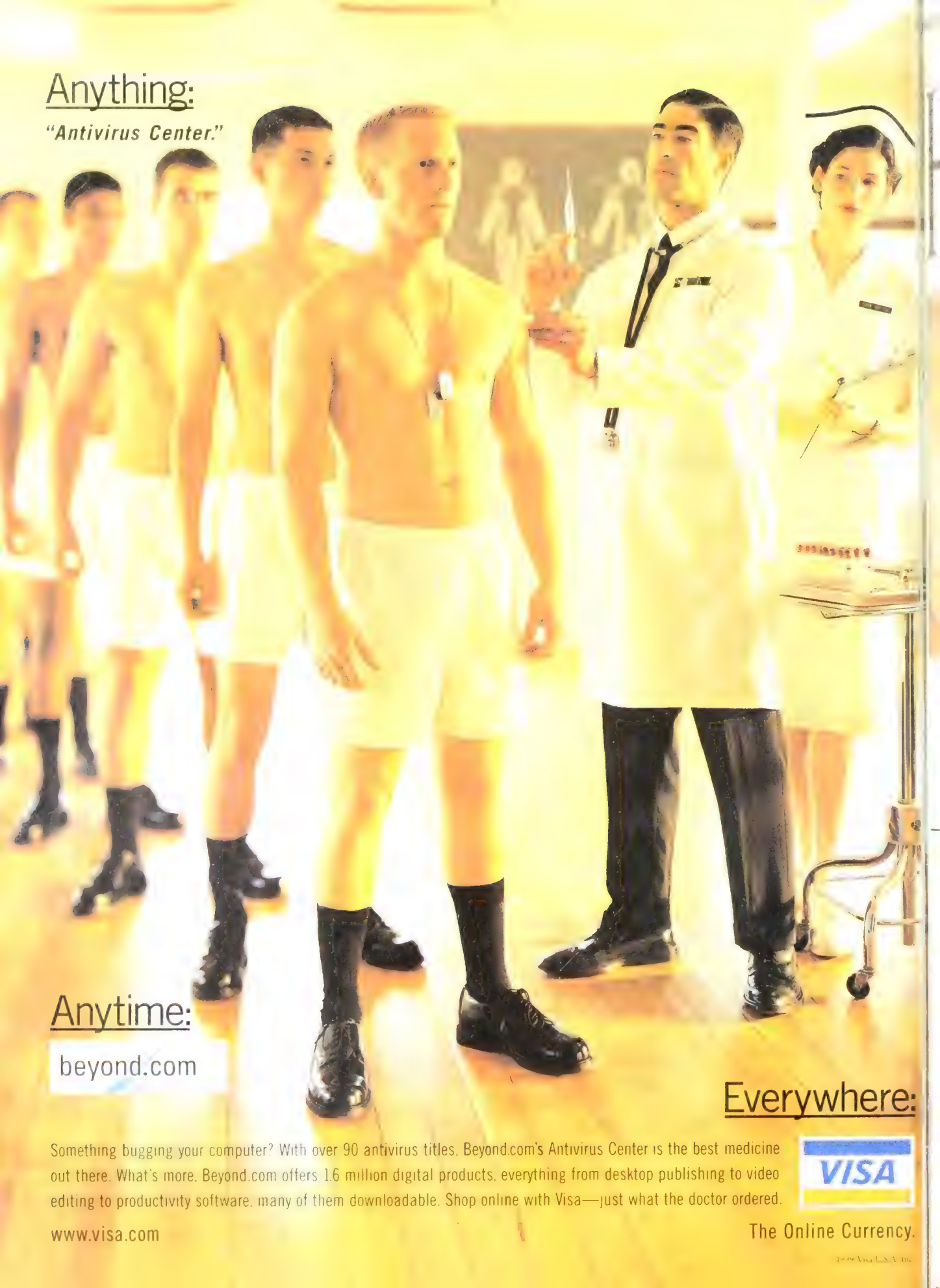
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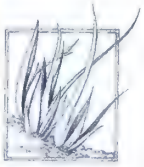
ONAN THE MAGNIFICENT
The Triumph of the Testicle in Contemporary Art
By Roger D. Hodge

EIGHTY YEARS AND AFTER
A memoir by William Dean Howells

Also: Meghan Daum, Justin Haythe, and mantis lust

Racing To The Moon.

Instinct and moonlight guide them to the ocean. For newborn sea turtles, it is a run

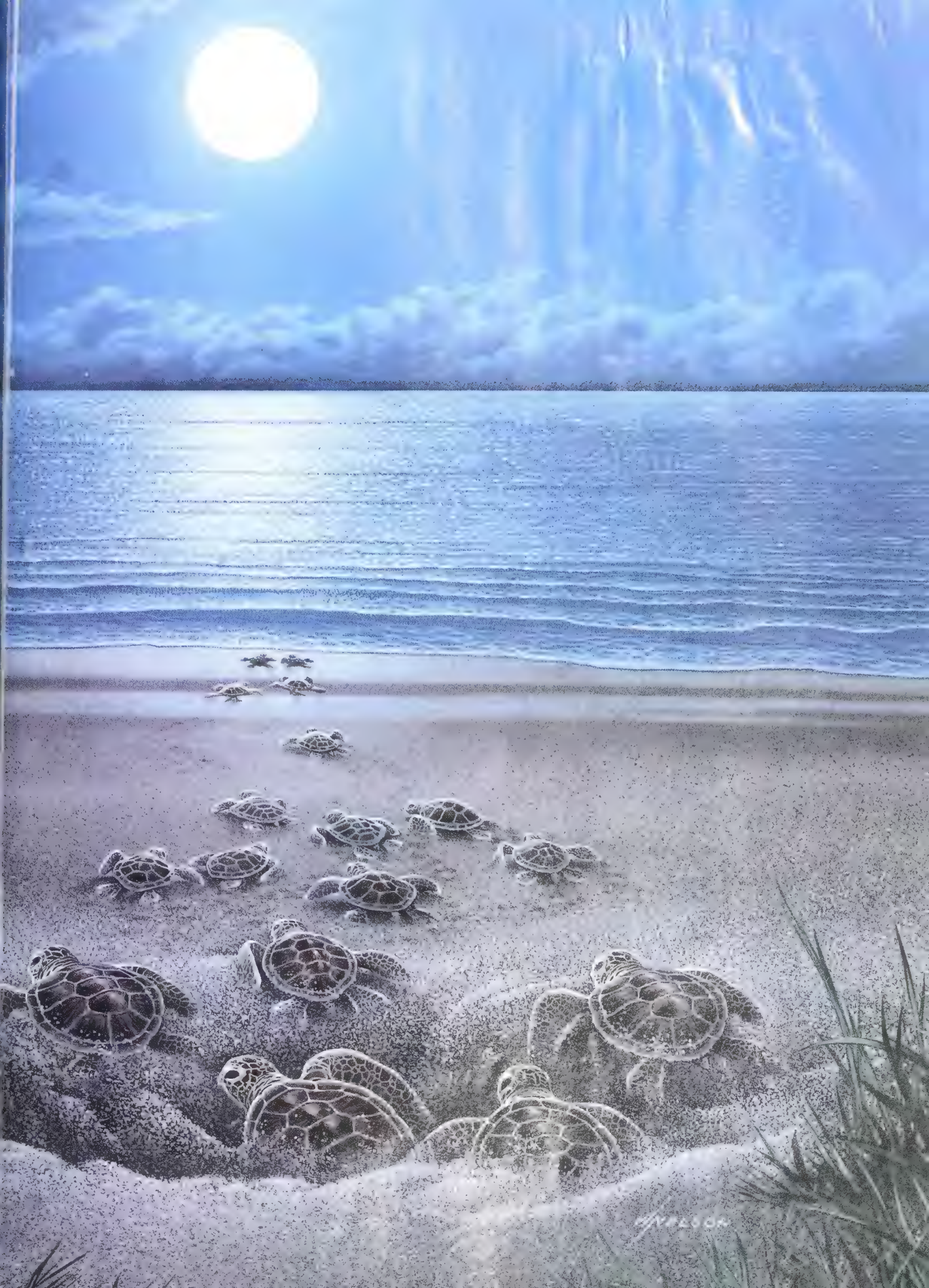


for survival. They must quickly move past predators to the safety of deep water. That's why people working in partnership on Thevenard Island conceal the light from their oil and gas operations. So the turtles won't be drawn off-course. Which helps protect a threatened species by making certain the only light visible is the one that leads home.

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Warren Brice
Houston Food Bank

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Warren works at the Houston Food Bank — one of many local programs across the nation that collect fruits and vegetables from wholesalers and distribute them to families in need. Supported by the *Fresh Produce Initiative* from Kraft Foods, Inc., and its parent company, Philip Morris Companies Inc., the Houston Food Bank can provide 60 servings of fresh produce for each dollar contributed.

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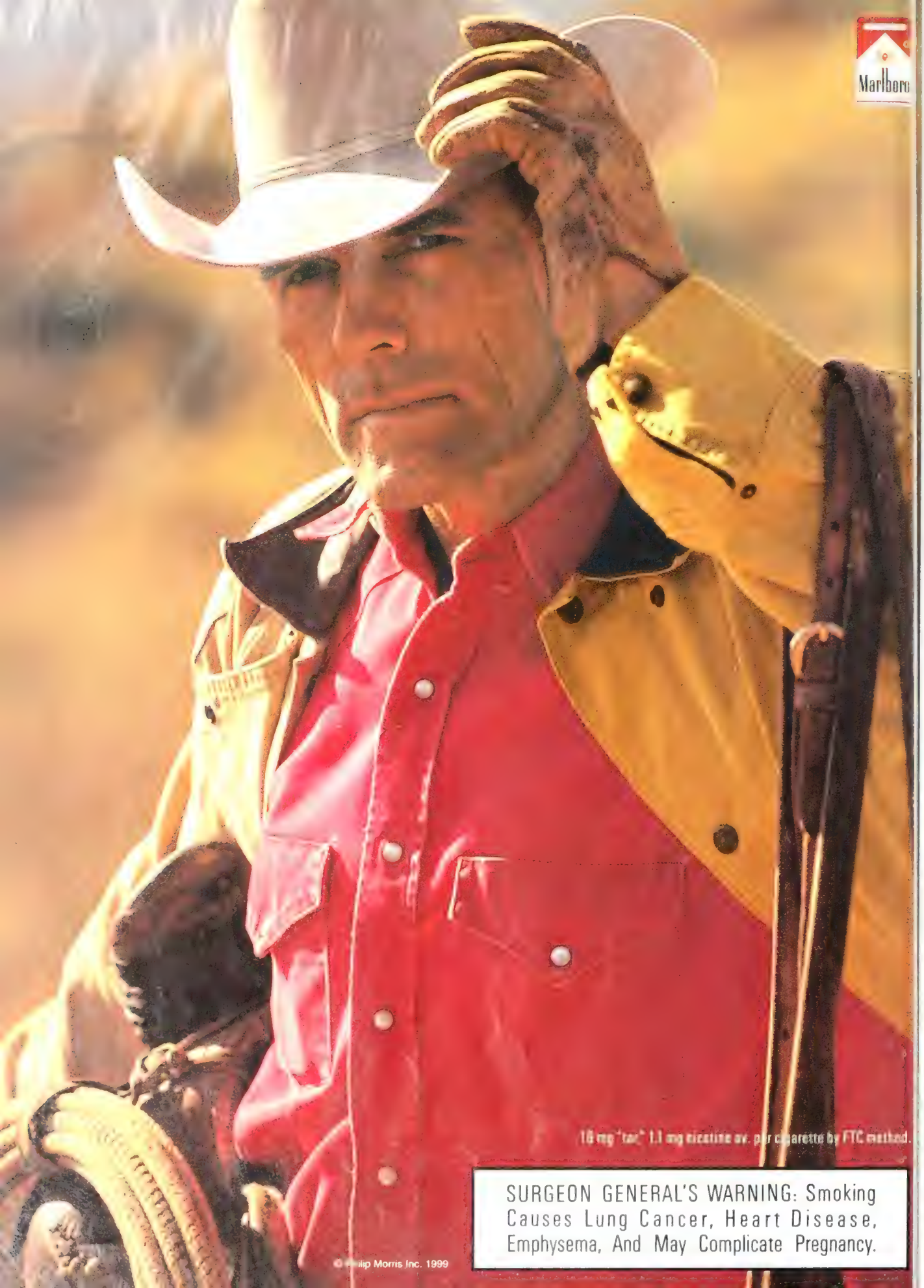
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HARPER'S

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HATE SPRINGS ETERNAL



On festive occasions, writes the mouth, William Dean Howells [illegible]
ILLUSTRATION BY TULLIO PERICOLI

Harper's Magazine is owned and published [illegible]

[illegible]

HARPER'S

LETTERS

High Journalism

Applaud Graham Boyd and Jack Hitt for detailing how the drug war has made a mockery of the Bill of Rights ["This Is Your Bill of Rights, on Drugs," December]. One important point, however, was left out. The fundamental principle of liberty on which our Constitution is based was expressed by Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*: "The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others." Hence, whenever the government seeks to prevent a person from doing some alleged injury to himself, it acts illegitimately. It is a great tragedy of American political history that this principle was considered so axiomatic by Jefferson and the other drafters of the Constitution that they neglected to articulate it explicitly there. Had they done so, misguided federal campaigns to criminalize private behavior, such as Prohibition and the war on drugs, would have encountered stiffer resistance.

William Eagle
Pittsburgh

The fundamental failure of our government's policy on drugs is that prohibition has made criminals of a conscientiously dissenting minority. It has not merely restricted members of that minority to practicing their whim only at certain times, places and frequencies (which might be justified in the public interest) but criminalized them outright, with penalties often more severe than those levied for major crimes against complaining victims, such as manslaughter, rape, arson, and armed robbery.

In a free society, the rights of individual autonomy are inevitably dependent on the principle that members of minorities must be protected from the tyranny of the majority. The greatest failing of drug prohibition is not, as the authors suggest, the abuses relating to its enforcement but that large numbers of citizens—a sizable minority—are being punished for activities that they honestly believe are their own business and within their rights.

Peter Webster
International Journal of Drug Policy
Holland

Graham Boyd and Jack Hitt's anti-drug-war screed is so full of error and hyperbole that it's fair to ask what *Harper's Magazine* was smoking prior to publication. For example:

The authors state that Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey "threatened to arrest any doctor who merely *mentioned* to a patient" that marijuana might reduce pain. McCaffrey, however, threatened only to revoke prescription powers for doctors who recommended o

prescribed maximum, based upon the obvious clash between state and federal law (as the Boyd should know, since he represented California doctors who sued in San Francisco federal court in 1997).

The authors also allege that Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia "decided that religious freedom would have to yield to the new drug-war orthodoxy" in a case pitting Second Amendment rights against the use of peyote, a hallucinogen that's illegal in the state of Oregon. In reality, in *Employment Division v. Smith* Scalia was joined by five henchpersons in a 6-to-3 decision that was a bit of a no-brainer (even the dissents were about the appropriate standard to apply): all religious practices must conform to criminal law. Hence, we cannot sacrifice virgins as often as we'd like, nor can we make as equivalent to First Communion the consumption of methamphetamine. The authors' suggestion that "[o]nce upon a time, the decision would have been simple" may refer to an earlier time, in a dorm room of yore, when the pipe was passed and legal debate was whether [illegible] that come with marijuana. It does not, however, refer to the Supreme Court precedent.

Hitt and Boyd [illegible] the practice of [illegible] to Jim Crow laws. What [illegible] and poll taxes once held in [illegible] Black suffrage has found a contemporary replacement"). This rhetorical sweep is both offensive and inaccurate. Historically, it equates law-abiding blacks denied opportunity to cast ballots by rigged procedures to felons denied the right to vote for violating well-established criminal statutes. I suppose this is acceptable at a time when Jesse Jackson invokes the spirit of Rosa Parks to save the hides of young black men expelled from high school for participating in incidents of physical violence. But how can the practice of disallowing voting by convicted felons be racist when 1) the "vindictive" states who maintain this policy maintained it prior to the advent of the [illegible] sentencing for drug crimes (even if, as mentioned by the authors, [illegible] felon voting [illegible] its enactment), and [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

have. To quote Ben Franklin: "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Graham Boyd and Jack Hitt
New Haven, Conn.

Making Amendments

In your explanatory note about the document mistakenly identified as the Bill of Rights in Graham Boyd and Jack Hitt's Annotation ["Clarification," January], you write of the document actually submitted by Congress to the states that "its first two articles, pertaining to the size of Congress and the compensation of its members, were rejected by state legislatures and thus consigned to historical obscurity."

This was indeed the case until recently, but as there is no constitutional provision for states to rescind their approval of a proposed amendment, these amendments remained available for ratification in perpetuity. The amendment on compensation of members of Congress continued to gather support fitfully over the centuries and finally reached the three-fourths mark in 1992, more than 200 years after it was submitted. It is now the Twenty-seventh Amendment.

Richard D. Plotz, M.D.
Providence, R.I.

Against Repeal

The letters written in response to Daniel Lazare's essay proposing the repeal of the Second Amendment [Letters, January] raised some provocative points. They did not, however, alert your readers to the fact that Lazare's basic premise—that the existence of the Second Amendment "makes effective gun control in this country all but impossible"—is contrary to more than sixty years of undisturbed legal precedent. Lazare concludes that we can do nothing to stop the bloodshed unless we repeal the Second Amendment. But his constitutional despair is completely unwarranted.

The Supreme Court definitively resolved any possible legal debate regarding the meaning of the Second Amendment more than fifty years ago in *Miller* (1939). In that seminal case, the Court rejected a Second Amendment challenge to a law prohibiting the interstate transportation of sawed-off shotguns, holding that the "obvious purpose" of the amendment was "to assure the continuation and render possible the effectiveness" of the state militia.

Although Lazare mentions in passing that the Supreme Court has already interpreted the Second Amendment, he is apparently unaware that every single federal and state appellate court to consider the issue since that time has rejected the argument that the amendment guarantees an individual's right to possess firearms free from governmental regulation. The Supreme Court has consistently denied review of those lower-court decisions, indicating that those decisions were constitutionally sound. Thus, it is not, as Lazare suggests, the ACLU and "other liberal groups" that have rejected the "individualist interpretation" of the Second Amendment; it is our country's judiciary.

Unfortunately, the NRA has repeated its mantra about the Second Amendment so frequently that most Americans, including many journalists and policymakers, believe it to be true. Former Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger severely criticized the NRA's manipulation of public opinion in this regard, accusing the group of perpetrating a "fraud on the American public." Daniel Lazare's essay only helps to perpetuate this fraud, albeit unwittingly.

Constitutional scholars and historians may continue to debate the precise intent of the Founding Fathers with respect to the Second Amendment. However, academic debate on this issue cannot change legal precedent. Unless and until the Supreme Court reverses *U.S. v. Miller*, our government will remain free to regulate the manufacture, sale, and possession of firearms.

We do not, as Lazare concludes, need a new Constitution. What we need are political leaders who are willing to stand up to the gun lobby and do something to end the violence that is ravaging our nation.

Juliet A. Leftwich
Legal Community Against Violence
San Francisco

I certainly don't want to take am
Rebecca Tolley-Stokes's assertion
hat packing a pistol is her inalien-
le right to self-defense, but it is
he Constitution, which she feels
oesn't "acknowledge" her, that in
ct protects her right to own a gun
hat we haven't lived up in every
ay to the ideals of the Constitu-
ion doesn't invalidate those ideals;
he document has kept them alive
r us to work toward.

She made me wonder, though: Has
he exponential increase in gun own-
rship been of benefit other than to
he gun industry? I wonder how many
ases there have been of gun owners
uccessfully defending themselves
with their weapons. Have instances
f rape, which Tolley-Stokes claims
o want to protect herself from, de-
reased as handgun ownership has in-
reased? Or does a person just *feel*
more secure with a piece in her purse?

Charles Rice
Sendai, Japan

Dung Jury

The hype over the Brooklyn Mu-
seum's Sensation show has been
splattered so far and wide that even
Lewis Lapham, a recent recipient
["Performance Art," Letter, De-
cember]. He leaps headlong into the
same mess as those politicians, cul-
ture mavens, and social critics he
ridicules. Lest there be any misunderstanding
himself, Lapham—like all the oth-
ers—avoids talking about the art.

The truth is, despite the Metro-
politan Museum director's peremptory
dismissal of the show as "very, very
bad," Sensation, like it or not, was a
viable and valid summation of cer-
tain legitimate art trends.

Forget the Charles Saatchi con-
nection; forget the museum direc-
tor's maneuvering for cultural recog-
nition; forget Giuliani's pandering to
a weak-minded electorate. Go and
see the show. Then—and only
then—can you engage in the debate.
Because the dung isn't splattered or
slung; it's sculpted and very carefully
placed. And that makes all the dif-
ference.

Richard Schlesinger
New York City

Shock value, predictably, is what
viewers would rate as sophomoric at
best. Such shock tactics are more in
soulful American models like Walt
Whitman and Allen Ginsberg, who
were unafraid to express their pas-
sion and compassion with both tender-
ness and fire. Why get excited and take
sides when performance artists such as
Rudy Giuliani, Hakeem Olajuwon, and
Cardinal John O'Connor will volun-
teer their services and provide free
front-page ad space at no cost? As
the owner of the artwork on display,
Saatchi has seen his investment
compound exponentially with each
headline and sound bite. Once
again, we witness America's truest
art form—advertising.

Dan Langston
Augusta, Ga.

The U.S. government, like any
other patron of the arts, and is con-
stantly exercising its discretion and
taste. Sensation is only a more public
and visible case than usual. The real
question is why the city of New York



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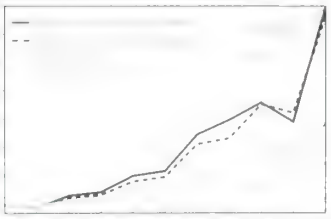
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is involved in arts funding in the first place. It is ironic that so many artists profess a "social conscience" and at the same time so eagerly promote their interests, clamoring for government subsidies. They step over derelicts on their way to the opening and never question their God-given right to government money. While they fiddle with their painting and sculpture or smear themselves with chocolate, patting themselves on self-righteous backs, Rome burns.

I believe that the arts have an important place in any community, but I wonder if arts funding should be a priority for the government. Isn't governmental arts funding a classic case of the poor subsidizing the rich? After all, you won't see too many poor people in line to see Sensation at $7 or $10 a pop, but their tax dollars will be part of the $7 million New York City gives to the museum. The poor are busy at home, having picked up their kids from overcrowded public schools, and are spending the evening worrying about not having health insurance. Surely their tax dollars could be better spent improving their communities; and the artists, with their "social conscience," should be among the first to realize this. Unfortunately, the arts community is busy having wine and cheese, pursuing its own interests, pausing now and then to rail against the injustice of censorship.

The city of New York has no business funding the arts until it takes care of the more essential community services that it has neglected for so long.

Scott Friedenthal
New York City

Passing Over Buck

In 1938, the year in which her essay ["America's Medieval Women," Archive, December] first appeared in *Harper's Magazine*, Pearl S. Buck received the Nobel Prize in literature. The biographical note on the opening page of the reprinted essay does not mention the award. It is a curious omission, and hard to imagine in any account, however brief, of the life of a *man* of letters. Buck herself, who knew well that "women artists in any field are not often taken seriously" in this country, would perhaps

have expected as much, though she might have expected better.

Christopher S. Mazzano
Cary, N.C.

A Defense of Prose

I was stunned to see that you printed not a single favorable comment on Francine Prose's superb article about the teaching of literature in high schools. I was not surprised, however, to see that some of the condemnatory letters were from teachers. They are, after all, the end product of the first wave.

For at least two generations, we have bent all our efforts in public education to lowering the bar, to asking less, to "making it easier" for our lazy, pampered, and frighteningly undereducated young. In what is often a child's first exposure to the reality of having to strive in order to achieve something, we simply take away the need. And now, in the fruits of those efforts, we have a cadre of teachers of whom less has been asked, who have had it made easier, and who are, basically and woefully, undereducated.

Betty Koch
Palo Alto, Calif.

Three Days of Peace and Lies

David Samuels is a prototype of his generation ["Rock Is Dead," November], bent on idealizing the mindless commercial celebration of the Woodstock festival of the 1960s while failing to recognize or admit that the decay we witnessed this time around, at Woodstock 99, was only the logical conclusion to the meager freedoms expressed by the original hippies and rock and rollers. Their culture of self-proclaimed love and peace bred the festival of rape, aggression, and violence. The problem is not simply that his generation now drives Volvos on the way to the spa, as Samuels suggests; it seems to me that even then, in 1969, they had no idea about what was involved in creating and sustaining a good life. Propagating the myths of that era with all its emblems seems

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NOTEBOOK

Goliath

By Lewis H. Lapham

[illegible] the world in reconstruct it
Orson Welles

Thirty years ago the standard complaint of the news media took the form of a mild statement about subversive political agendas and ungrateful children. The complainants, usually corporate executives militantly conservative, gathered in the country club bar to tell each other we all were in the great good American place, enjoying the rewards (the well-deserved rewards) of a rich society and a free economy, and out there in the [illegible] somewhere on the far side of the fifth fairway, the yellow [illegible] "the so-called liberal press" were barking about Vietnam, civil rights, and the friendless poor. The noise was a disgrace, and as the wine went around the table so did the expressions of indignation and disgust with the media, which were called as immoral, arrogant, self-righteous, careless, ignorant, and vain.

The times have changed, and so have the critics. Instead of the indictment and the [illegible] against the plaintiff [illegible] weighing against "the press," we have journalists (also novelists and philosophers) appalled by the mindless barbarism of the "infotainment industry." [illegible] congratulating himself on January 5 [illegible] speaks of his absence as a consumma-

every little bit of CNN's 168 hours of 'coverage', to have failed to catch even one thoughtful moment of PBS's 24 hours of important talk; to have missed the report from Roswell, N.M., on 'Fox 2000', to have neglected to observe the opening of London's Millennium Dome, David Letterman's special 'Late Show,' Jay Leno's special monologue, the premiere of Stephen Spielberg's 'The Unfinished Journey,' and President Clinton's chat with the kids on Nickelodeon."

Rejoicing in his escape from a commercial culture so "increasingly intrusive and annoying" that he has come to regard it as "the beast," Kelly proceeds to manifesto and exhortation, urging like-minded readers to "disconnect," "pull the plug," turn away from the ubiquitous puppets on the "morally degraded, and degrading," screen. "Think of it. It is in your power to plunge Bill Gates into poverty, to send Peter Jennings off to 'Good Morning, Saskatchewan,' to rid the world of Disney-licensed products, to see Martha Stewart and Jerry Springer reduced to talking only to each other."

The sentiment is by no means unique to Kelly. During the first two weeks of January I came across five people who voiced similar degrees of fear and loathing for the notion of connectedness: a woman who could no longer bear to walk into a Barnes & Noble superstore ("hideous and chaotic"), a former correspondent for *Vanity Fair* who had thrown his cell phone off the George Washington Bridge, another man resolved to read nothing published after 1955, two women so depressed by the prospect of Y2K and *Time Warner* that they had broken off relations with the Internet. Although at different ages and occupations, each of the respondents expressed contempt for what one of them, the woman in exile from Barnes & Noble, characterized as "a giant with the head of a child."

I could share their wish to hide from Martha Stewart, but what else could anybody reasonably expect of a business that is mostly about shopping? The on-camera people appear as advertisements, for themselves as well as for the products that come most expensively to hand, and on New Year's Eve the footage of the Eiffel Tower and the Parthenon served as settings similar to the black felt in a jeweler's case—back cloths flattering to the brilliance of the Jennings ruby and the Brokaw diamond. The next day's newspapers reproduced the same dispiriting effect, as did the innumerable listings of the millennium's best generals, finest wines, worst accidents, most inspired poets, and significant second basemen. The rankings serve to magnify the importance of the brand-name critics who arrange the merchandise (tragical-historical, pastoral-tragical, historical-comical) as if for display in the windows of Bloomingdale's or Bergdorf Goodman. Similar marketing strategies sustain the talk shows (the guests presented as the news, the news as studio decoration) and account for much of what now passes for art and entertainment.

If a prior generation of media critics thought that newspapers and television broadcasts should provide them, at a price of twenty-five cents or less, not only with violent sensation and high-minded sentiment but with moral instruction, accurate



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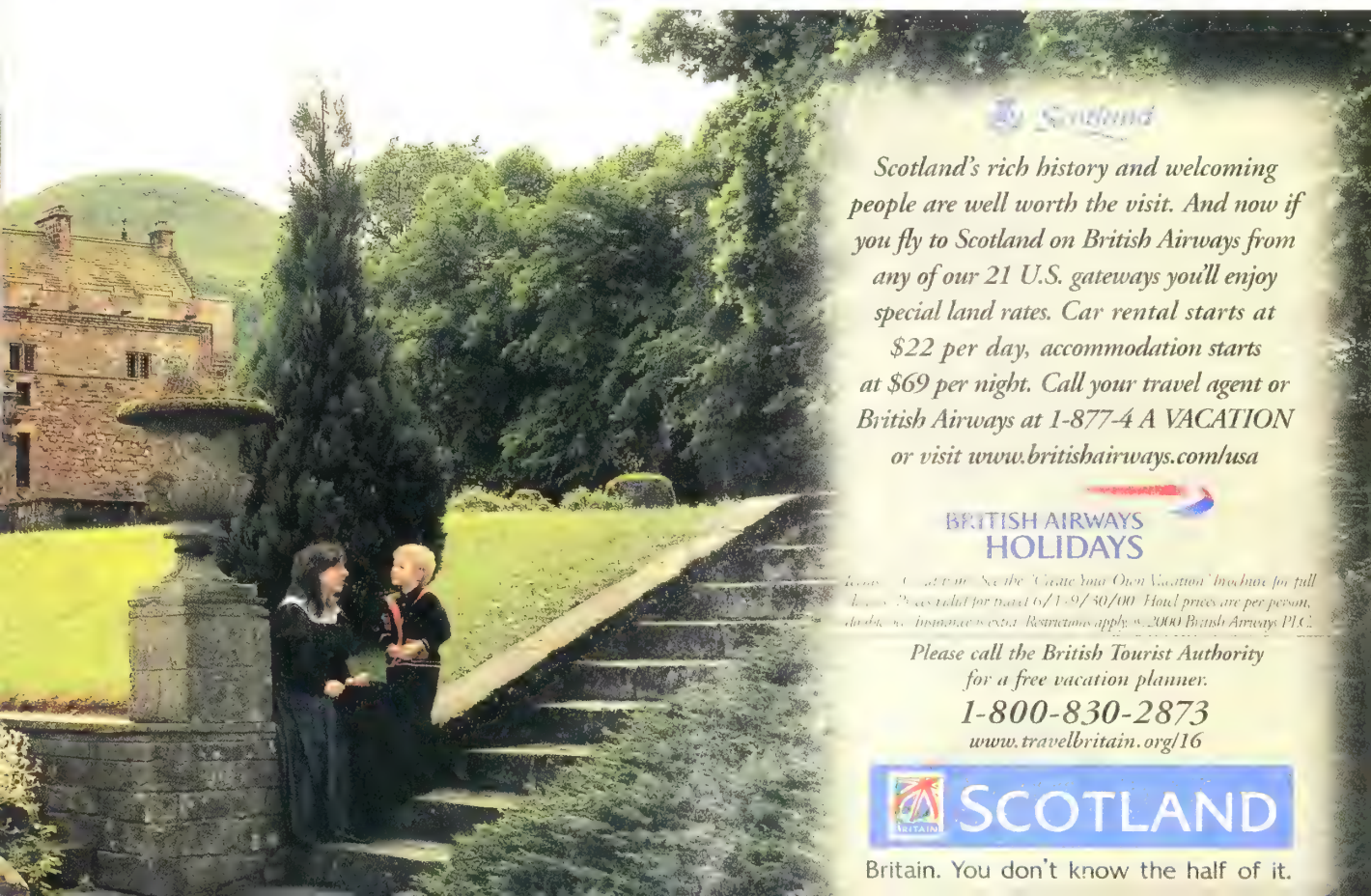

It's a far cry from London, but a surprisingly short trip.

...all-consuming extensiveness of the self, and in line with the observations of Alexis de Tocqueville, he attributes the burden of melancholy to a peculiarly American set of circumstances. "Although the citizens of democratic nations easily attain equality of condition," they never reach the limits of their always proliferating desire, and the wish to seize every toy in the store produces sickness of heart and accounts for the "strange melancholy" that haunts them "in the midst of abundance." The traditional American remedy for the illness consists in the fierce embrace of a belief that furnishes the mind with something to believe in. The Americans during their first two hundred years in the wilderness assigned their hope of deliverance (from death as well as melancholy) to the Christian story of salvation preached by Jonathan Edwards and Cotton Mather. Submission to an angry and all-sufficient God allowed for the achievement of low self-esteem, which in turn deflated the markets in both vainglory and despair.

The Christian promise of [illegible] toward the radiant [illegible] of a new Jerusalem [illegible] other two hundred years by the idea of the sacred American mission. Told by Emerson, Lincoln, and Whitman, Heaven relocated to the "new experimental utopia" in which Melville found the promise of putting "even in a wilder life than that of the world" selfish little interests," and to which Melville assigned the task of redemption. "We Americans are the peculiar, chosen people—the Israel of our time; we bear the ark of the liberties of the world. . . . God has given to us, for an future inheritance, the [illegible] domain of the political pagans, that shall yet come and lie down under the shade of our ark, without bloody hands being lifted. . . . And let us always remember that with ourselves, almost for the first time in the history of earth, national selfishness is unbounded philanthropy; for we can not do good to America but we give alms to the world."

The events of the 1960's reduced Melville's idealism to absurdity and farce. The government's implacable lying about the motives and conduct of [illegible] Vietnam [illegible] that [illegible] one another in which [illegible] could have [illegible] Americans have heard the "sacred trust" [illegible] anywhere.

So brief a process doesn't fairly represent Dellinger's [illegible] Kelly's unhappiness on an historical [illegible] Because I'm old enough to remember the Second World War and the loss of America's innocence, I'm also old enough to remember that before 1960 most of the writers and editors in New York assumed that their [illegible] in common with carpenters and [illegible] than they did with soothsayers and lyric poets. They hired themselves out as artisans, not immortal artists, and many of them would have assented to the judgement of Carl Van Vechten, the [illegible] editor of the *New York Times*, who in late [illegible] refused to decorate the paper's new [illegible] with bylines on the ground that he was "not running an employment agency for



journalists." The loss of the story about the redeeming American nation seemed to unleash the impulse to accept the permanence of impunity, and under the influence of what in the 1960's was beginning to be called the New Journalism, the new recruits arriving from expensive universities with bound volumes of the absolute truth claimed the executive privilege of novelists manqué. The exemption allowed them to arrange the materials at hand (descriptions of scenes, tones of voice, fragments of conversation, impressions of character, etc.) into whatever designs attracted the most applause and the highest fees. The self-regarding journalists of the day presented their own advertisements for reality as literal renderings of the world of historical event, and taking to heart the lessons of the Age of Aquarius and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, they began to write books—ostensibly about war or politics or the presidency—that could as easily have been submitted to a third-grade homeroom teacher under the heading "My Wonderful Summer."

The trend toward solipsism has continued unabated since the adventure at the Watergate, the first spawn of heroic self-examination hatched by Norman Mailer leading, more or less directly, to Joe McGinniss writing a book on the persons of Teddy Kennedy and Edmund Morris practicing the authorized biography of Ronald Reagan on his own *Dutch*—a work in which the place of coherent or dramatic story, we have idiosyncratic collage, cultural studies instead of historical narratives, the product made for people in the habit of reading books at the very time that they have begun to read books less because of high expectations than because of low ones. Photographs of Princess Di may be sure to tell a story, but because they testify to the transformation of mortal flesh into divine celebrity. Somewhere in the middle Nineties all the brightly packaged selves came to look so interchangeable that it was impossible to tell which one was the famous media superstar (Oprah? Madonna? Jerry Seinfeld?) and which was the last-place finisher.

To the suppliers of infotainment, the distinction hasn't seemed to matter. The important point is the delivery system, attracting the customer on line in the Net, and once the wire has been securely fastened to a phone bill or credit card, who cares who sells what to whom as long as all present think they stand an even chance of waking up in paradise one morning with Jennifer Lopez or Donald Trump.

But to blame the news media for the poor result is still as much of a mistake as it was thirty years ago. Then as now, the media offered a complete range of dubious fact and worthless opinion, and it was left to the reader to sift the compost heap for materials that might add to the sum of achievable story. During World War II British raiding units pressed far behind German lines in the North African desert in search of stray pieces of metal. The patrols collected anything that came to hand—a shell casing, a broken axle, a button torn from the uniform of a dead corporal. The objects were sent to Cairo for analysis, and by this means British intelligence guessed at the state of German war machinery.

So also with journalism. The data are fugitive and insufficient, comparable to microorganisms or subatomic particles out of which the higher forms of thought might yet evolve. The newspapers yield only as much as the reader brings to his or her reading, and if the cure for melancholy consists of the escape from the prison of the self, the hope of freedom rests with the asking of better questions—not what can I buy and who will I become, but what can I make? The proposition was never more eloquently put than by T. H. White in *The Once and Future King*: "'The best thing for being sad,' replied Merlyn, beginning to puff and blow, 'is to learn something. That is the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins, you may miss your only love, you may see the world about you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honour trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then—to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting.'" ■

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HARPER'S INDEX

Ratio of major party presidential primaries to be held before Texas governor George W. Bush announced his candidacy in 1994 : 1:0

Percentage of major party delegates to be selected by March 1 this year : 3

Percentage who were chosen by March 1 in 1976 : 33

Factor by which on-line campaign contributions to Al Gore last year exceeded contributions to Gore in 1996 : 9

Ratio of the combined value of AOL and Time Warner last January 10 to the annual budget of Mexico : 4:1

Number of companies that controlled over half of all U.S. media outlets in 1983 : 50

Number that controlled over half of all U.S. media outlets in 1997 : 6

Percentage of committee members advising the U.S. on WTO forest-issue negotiations who are timber executives : 100

Percentage of the WTO protesters arrested in Seattle last year who were charged with property damage but not violence : 9%

Damages awarded this year to prisoners who "suffered reprisals" after the 1971 Attica prison uprising against the ex-prisoners : $50,000

Damages awarded Pizza Hut last winter after it sued a competitor whose ad claimed Hut's "better" pizza : $467,000

Ratio of Kmart's U.S. sales in 1998 to the estimated budget of the Russian military : 1:1

Ratio of the average size of a Tokyo residence to that of a U.S. [illegible] average : 4:1

Factor by which average air-pollution levels inside a moving car on an L.A. highway exceed those outside the car : 1.5

Average percentage change in East Coast air pollution between Monday and Thursday : −4

Average percentage by which the amount of East Coast rainfall on a Sunday exceeds the amount on a Monday : 22

Minimum number of miles of West Virginia streams buried by mining waste since 1986 : 470

Chance that a U.S. nuclear power plant's worker will contract a fatal illness : 1 in 5

Estimated percentage change since 1979 in the number of bird-killing Federally Licensed communications towers : +180

Percentage of the senior editorial staff of *Talk* magazine that has resigned since the magazine's debut last summer : 20

Estimated amount the BBC paid for noise-producing software last year after workers complained of the sound : $1,000

Percentage change since 1997 in the number of Britons waiting to get on the National Health Service's waiting list : +16%

Number of Parisians who break bones or are hospitalized each year after tripping on dog poop : 600

Percentage of the residents of Northern Ireland who report feeling happy : 92

Percentage of the residents of the rest of the U.K. who do : 79

Fine levied on a California man last fall for shooting at a wild rattlesnake with a hunting bow, then beating it : $1,000

Percentage of Hawaiian bird species that have become extinct since 1778 : 49

Percentage change since the 1970s in the number of salmon in the Atlantic Ocean : −99

Number of states that introduced legislation forbidding discrimination against motorcyclists last year : 8

Number of people in North Carolina killed by automobiles since 1998 after having run the red light they were driving : 66

Number of rented 40-foot refrigerator trailers the FAA plans to have on hand to house victims of the year 2000 : 4

Percentage change since 1993 in the number of criminal cases licensed each year in New York City : +132

Percentage of "born again" New Yorkers who have said they will vote for Hillary Clinton for senator : 44

Number of times Elizabeth Dole mentioned Ronald Reagan in her endorsement of George W. Bush last winter : 5

Number of federal fraud charges of which former Massachusetts Governor William Weld was found guilty in 1998 : 0

Percentage of major U.S. recording labels that use the parental warning stickers advocated by Tipper Gore in 1985 : 100

Years after Frank Zappa called Gore's campaign "extortion" that he [illegible] in order to market his own albums : 14

Rank of Adam Sandler and Bill Gates among the most popular role models with male college freshmen : 1,2

Number of *Playboy* centerfold models since 1959 who have [illegible] : 12

Number of British women killed last fall by [illegible] : 2

Items culled by [illegible]
Harper's Magazine



Lincoln Navigator. American Luxury.

READINGS

[Essay]

THE FACES OF ANTS

From "Note 3 Not (White and Wrong)," part of a series of notes by South African poet Breyten Breytenbach, which he gave to his students last fall at New York University's graduate writing program. Breytenbach's most recent book is Dog Heart: A Memoir.

I don't know whether I've written this before. One plunders the notebook again and again.

I find: "The past is the ink with which we write the present—and in the process and the flow of writing the words, the concepts and ideas, the images, the flights become . . . just *ink*. Whereas what we'd probably like to write would be an open hand wherein time, which is the future of the present movement, could find its fit and its fist."

A little further I find: "You must polish the word—not to have it shiny or smooth but to make it as clear as a mirror or a pebble in which you can read your face, and may see that your face is death." And then: "The recognition and the acceptance of the Other's humanity (or humanness) is a maiming of self. You have to wound the self, cut it in strips, in order to *know* that you are similar and of the same substance of shadows."

These reflections surface during a visit to Weimar, where I'm to be a member of the jury deciding which philosophical essay best answers the question of how to free the future from the past and the past from the future. It is a curious town, the small provincial capital of Thüringen; egg-yellow facades are washed to keep up a sun-splashed face of classicism and quaint comfort and the late bourgeois charms of GDR democracy—but in the back streets houses are rotting from neglect and decay. The town is flooded with Goethe; he is on every menu; the dogs don't piss against trees and lampposts, they bark snippets of the great man's wisdom. And to a lesser extent there are Schiller and Herder and Liszt, who played his piano in a room with an ornate ceiling, and Nietzsche, who stroked his madness in his mother's house as if it were a mustache. Then spirits flutter above the rooftops and the steeples the way banners are the remembrance of republics and of battles.

It is fitting when we visit the replica of Goethe's *Gartenhaus*. A blonde lady architect guides us through the low-beamed rooms of the exact copy of the small house where the master used to work. Look, she says and points, we photographed the floor tiles of the original dwelling so that we could faithfully reproduce the spots and the scratches; and look, this is the identical copy of his writing desk where we made precisely the same ink stains blot by blot. When she turns her back to escort us to the next room, Andrei Bitov, the Russian author, slips a kopeck into one of the desk's small drawers, "to fuck up the symmetry and destroy the German soul."

But why this? Because we wanted to see if it could be done, the girl guide says. It cost nearly

two million Teutsche marks to assemble. Now you see it, now you don't. The original, nearby in the Buchenwald museum of the night, is for pious ogling; the clone you can run your hands over. Isn't that not the definition of totalitarianism, the repetition of the same?' And now, what about crime? Will they touch up the copy to keep, in time, the same wear and tear as the original? Or will the original be brought into line with its monstrous shadow?

On Sunday, after adjudicating an essay called "A Dictionary of Winds" the best entry,

[Calendar]

REMEMBERING IL DUCE

From a Year 2000 calendar, "Benito Mussolini: With You in the Third Millennium," produced by [illegible] in the Puglia region of Italy, and sponsored by the far-right National Alliance Party, to mark Year 78 of the Fascist era. Each month features a photograph of Mussolini and a Fascist slogan; the phrase "So that the young [illegible]" appears at the bottom of each page. Translated from the Italian by Marco[illegible]

If there is a country where true democracy is a reality, that country is Fascist Italy.

Liberty without order and discipline means dissolution and catastrophe.

Fascism is not only action, it is also thought.

A battle is won by one general or is lost by an assembly of generals.

The Americans have the supreme privilege of not understanding anything of Europe in general and Italy in particular.

A [illegible] education, so that tomorrow Italian and Fascist, like Italian and Catholic, will mean the same thing.

[illegible] I swear that I will abide unconditionally by the order of Il Duce and will follow with all my force, and if [illegible] the orders of the Leader to[illegible].

We [illegible]

we go up the hill to visit Buchenwald. It is so close by, a raven could bridge the distance like an open hand writing without thinking a single line of invisible ink! And yet, how distant it is.

There are trees up there, many trees, and clouds racing through a high-domed light-soaked sky, and birds being fluttered by the wind, and probably insects in the soil too. There's a breathtaking view over the gentle surroundings of flowing valleys and peaceful towns where Goethe must have taken his walks. And suddenly it is cold, so desperately cold—as if we'd moved into another world. We shouldn't have come.

A young man takes us through the camp. He is thickset and has dark half-moons under his eyes; he speaks English with a Scottish accent, probably that of a soccer fan, but the German breaks through painfully. He blurts out figures and facts relentlessly. This was a training ground for the SS, he tells us. As early as 1934. They came here young, sometimes only sixteen years old. They were to be the new elite to revolutionize society. The New Man could be unshackled only in a hierarchy of self-abnegation and arbitrary violence and torture. He saw this job as a guide advertised in the newspaper, the young man says, and so he applied. Sometimes he wonders. He has met survivors. He asked them: "What were your first thoughts when you woke up in the mornings here?"

We are shown the barracks. We see the exact replica of the small zoo where officials brought their families on Sunday outings—hardly three meters away from the barbed-wire enclosure keeping in the inmates. We pass through the narrow wrought-iron gate to the inner camp, with its mocking iron letters: *Jedem das Seine* ("To each his own"). Then we see the bare expanse, the broad view from up here overlooking the world with its harvests.

And then we're taken to the execution block, the tiles of the autopsy room, the furrows to sluice away the blood, the instruments shiny and elegant like slivered mirrors or like pebbles. Then the ovens and the urns and in the basement the hooks and the piano wire . . . We should not have come.

But this I cannot look at. This then is the other. This is Me. This is what we do. This is what we're like. Vietnam. Rwanda. Kosovo.

We cling to one another. The wind is in our eyes and our throats. A beautiful sunset purples the sky. Grandfather sky and father sky and son sky, and man. Grandmother wind and mother tree and daughter bird and grandchild insect through all the ages, and man once only. Once is enough.

Back in the hotel Andrej Bitow gives me a full glass of vodka, "to take the shiver out of



House of Rooms #1 [illegible] New York City

the soul." He clumsily cutting an apple with a bottle opener. "One must always have an apple with the vodka," he says. "Now go and take a hot bath."

Immediately I fall into a bottomless sleep. I have a first dream.

A bright white room. A column in the room. We hear at the periphery of our sight ... things moving in the underbrush. We sense that something is observing us from the trees, but clumsily you camouflage its presence. We think know it is an immortal. How can he be lured forth? Only one thing will work. We perpetrate a hoax in the sun-filled glade. This will be the irresistible bait. We know he/she is desperate to know what's written. Does the wind turn over the leaves of the book? Can the wind read? Are these questions?

How rotten with memory this earth is! And how the one thing slides over the other! When does memory become obliterated? Can we write everything? Are we not obliged to approach obliquely, camouflage our presence

[illegible] whole?

[illegible] and left to the wind. The town, too, should have been [illegible] remember.

[illegible] And when [illegible] *shalt laugh with thy whole mouth and thy whole belly.* 3 *Thou shalt study the expressions on the*

[Requests]

LAST SUPPERS

The list was published on the Web

Carlos Santana (executed 3/23/93): "Justice, Temperance, with Mercy."

Ruben Cantu (executed 8/24/93): Barbecue chicken, fried okra, brown rice, sweet tea, and bubble gum (bubble gum prohibited by TDCJ policy).

Richard Beavers (executed 4/4/94): Six pieces of French toast with syrup, jelly, butter, six barbecued spare ribs, six pieces of well-burned bacon, four scrambled eggs, five well-cooked sausage patties, french fries with ketchup, three slices of cheese, six pieces of yellow cake with chocolate icing, and four glasses of milk.

Vernon Sattiewhite (executed 8/15/95): Six scrambled eggs with cheese, seven pieces of buttered white toast, fifteen pieces of bacon, three hash browns, a bowl of grits with butter, jelly, and orange juice.

Frank Basil McFarland (executed 4/29/98): Hog[illegible] sliced tomatoes, sliced cucumber, four celery stalks, four sticks [illegible], and two cold half-pints of milk. Asked that all vegetables be washed prior to serving. Also [illegible].

Delbert Teague (executed 9/9/98): None. At [illegible].

David Allen Castillo (executed 9/23/98): [illegible] six [illegible] Mueller [illegible] ice cream.

[illegible] executed 12/9/98): [illegible] ment.

John Moody (executed 1/5/99): Two T-bone steaks, salad with French onion dressing, rolls, french fries with ketchup, five soft tacos, angel-food cake, one pint white-chocolate almond ice cream, and a six-pack of Pepsi.

Andrew Cantu (executed 2/17/99): Pork baby back ribs, hard-shell tacos, corn tortillas, french fries, salad with ranch dressing, red and green chili sauce, jalapeños and tomatoes boiled with garlic, root beer, and chocolate ice cream.

Charles Tuttle (executed 7/1/99): Four fried eggs sunny-side up, four sausage patties, one chicken-fried-steak patty, one bowl of white country gravy, five pieces of white toast, five tacos with meat and cheese only, four Dr. Peppers with ice on the side, and five mint sticks.

[Transcript]

LA DRAMA NOSTRA

From a March 3, 1999, FBI recording of alleged New Jersey mafiosi Anthony Rotondo, Joseph (Tin Lee) Schiavoni, Billy Lino, and a cooperating witness. The recording was an exhibit in the trial of thirty-nine alleged members of the DeCavalcante crime family in Manhattan last December.

ANTHONY ROTONDO: You heard what he just [illegible] now?

[illegible]: Who?

[illegible]NDO: This guy.

[illegible]ANI: He plays, he breaks, he drives me fucking crazy this guy.

[illegible]: He says, ah Anthony, he says, you know as well as I do it's going to be in court for twenty years. We ain't got twenty years.

[illegible]: And what did he say?

[illegible]NDO: I don't wanna do that. Do the math, Frankie. You'll be the man. I says, I says there's other people involved. You know, we got Uncle Joe.

[illegible]: Right. What he say?

[illegible]: He says that's the only way I know how to meet Jo Jo. How do I know who Jo Jo [illegible].

[illegible]: Me?

[illegible]: Yeah.

[illegible]ANI: They call me Jo Jo now. First I was Little Joey, then Joey Blue Eyes, now Jo Jo. When the heck did they get all these fucking names? . . .

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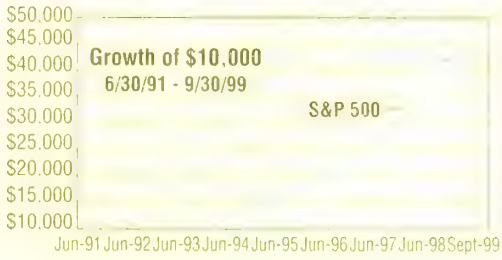
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Although the Fund is no-load, certain fees and expenses apply to a continued investment. DSIL Investment Services LLC, Distributor.

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10/99
ADHA004-05

GANGSTER IN THE HOUSE

M

little

in there.

Every show you watch, every show

existing over there.

Yeah.

it was, well from the beginning it was ah, the

Yeah.

The guy that died and had stomach

Yeah, but where do they get this in-

tion from?

Anywhere.

Joey, there's somebody close to you there

You know who it is, right? It's inside right on Third Avenue, in the bookstore.

No, that's not Sacco's.

Oh, it's supposed to be . . .

Really?

I'm telling you. You gotta watch.

So what they say?

Aren't they funny? I'm telling ya.

ever watch that, Ralph?

What characters. Great acting.

REPEAL THE RATS ACT NOW!

rent Michigan laws that

millennial Michi-

tester with the necessary and re-

ities. Provides up to $150 to supply the



Suit, *by Cornell Pinkham*, [illegible]

Regulates the size and content of containers for small fruit, berries, and vegetables.

[illegible]
Provides for the placement of a chestnut choke or mule by a blacksmith to cover the tongue portion of a bell for shoeing the animal.

[illegible]
Requires hotels to provide "water closets or privies properly screened for the separate use of males and females." Also requires hotels to be well-drained and free of raw sewage.

[illegible]
Requires parties engaged in cutting ice from Michigan lakes, rivers, and streams to adequately mark the location of the cutting activity as well as the open water created in the ice by the cutting.

[illegible]
Sections 34, 36, 39 – Creates a misdemeanor for immoral advertising, including ads offering cures or treatment for venereal diseases, the treatment or treatment of [illegible] "female irregularities." Creates a misdemeanor penalty for those who violate any provision of the act. Section 40 – Repeals [illegible] of an immoral character.

[illegible]
Prohibits the use of [illegible] in any public area other than a private room in the rear of the premises. Imposes penalties [illegible] misdemeanor.

[illegible]
Creates [illegible] to [illegible] under the [illegible] and the [illegible] of [illegible] public.

[illegible]
Makes it [illegible] to [illegible] another to [illegible] [illegible] regarding another person's refusal to accept a [illegible].

Creates a misdemeanor offense for a person, firm, or corporation who promotes, conducts, [illegible] a walkathon or any similar endurance contest.

Provides that any person who kills a black, brown, gray, or Norway rat shall be entitled to [illegible] rat head that is presented to the city, township, or village clerk. [illegible] that presented me the bounty [illegible] that [illegible] five rat heads. He left [illegible] required to turn the rat heads [illegible] county hunter a certificate indicating the amount of the bounty. The bounty [illegible] required to present the certificate [illegible] county clerk, who is directed to [illegible] from the county treasurer.

[illegible]

I MYSELF AM HELL

[illegible] *the interest of many psychiatrists, including*

I [illegible] in my outward life during the past years and [illegible] add some more about the forms [illegible] also vastly [illegible] the rays [illegible] corresponding to certain human words [illegible] their choice therefore is not subject to my will, but [illegible] to an influence exerted [illegible] from without. From the beginning the system of not-finishing-a-sentence prevailed that is to say, the vibrations caused in my nerves [illegible] the words so produced contain not mainly finished thoughts but unfinished ideas, or only fragments of ideas, which my nerves have to supplement to make up the sense. It is in the nature of nerves that if unconnected words or started phrases are thrown into them, they automatically attempt to complete them to finish thoughts satisfactory to the human mind.

The system of not finishing a sentence became more and more prevalent in the course of years, the more the souls lacked their own thoughts. Thus for years I have heard daily in hundred-fold repetition incoherent words spoken into my nerves without any context, such as "Why not" "Why, it," "Why, because I," "Be it," "With respect to him"; further, an absolutely senseless "Oh" is frequently thrown into my nerves; finally, certain fragments of sentences are added which were earlier on expressed completely, as for instance "Now I shall," "You were to," "I shall," "Lacking now is," "It will be," etc. In order to give the reader some idea of the original meaning of these incomplete phrases, I will add the way they used to be completed but are now omitted and left to be completed by my nerves. The phrases ought to have been "Now I shall resign myself to being stupid"; "You were to be represented as denying God and given to voluptuous excesses"; "I shall have to think about that first"; "Lacking now is only the leading idea, that is we, the rays, have no thoughts"; "It will be done now, the joint of pork."

The rather tasteless phrase about the joint of pork is due to my having used years ago the figure of speech "done like a joint of pork" in the nerve-language. This phrase was seized on and became a constantly recurring part of the speech-material. The "joint of pork" was to refer to myself: it was meant to express that I was done, that my power of resistance against the attacks on my reason by the rays must by now [illegible].

The questions or [illegible] particles spoken into my nerves compel my mind to work by setting the corresponding nerves in vibration, and even [illegible] they cannot possibly escape the impulse to think. I must leave undecided whether the expression I choose of my nerves being set in corresponding vibrations by the rays covers the circumstances correctly; what I directly feel is that the talking voices (lately in connection [illegible] the talking birds) as

...ce 1981, it has been predicted that climate ...calypse would be apparent by now. It hasn't ...ppened. Now the timetable has been extended to ...5 or 2100, but we'll see the disaster. Observation ...s it won't happen. All of these horror stories ...bout wild weather, searing drought, rampaging ...oods, howling blizzards, mega hurricanes, and ...mpant tropical disease are entirely based on ...mputer models.

What Was True 20 Years Ago Is True Today. When Gus Speth, ...aired "Global Energy Future and the Carbon Dioxide Problem" ... January 1981 as his final act at the White House Council of ...vironmental Quality, he wrote: "Each model ... has limited ...bility to include effects from various complex feedback ...echanisms and to compensate for natural variations in ...mperature and climate. The validity of the simulations has not ...en verified ... in part because climatic effects of increased CO_2 ...oncentrations have not yet been detected."

Weather Is Not Evidence of Climate Change. In January 2000, ...

THE
CO
1881

...

Greening Earth Society Launches a New Service. We're ...unching ... Web site that ... ... leading politicians, federal agency ... of the United Nations ... to pass off "virtual climate" as climate reality, visit www.greeningearthsociety.org. We'll post ... provide links ... and provide other ...ials ... and reports to help you enjoy life in the real world. You ...can help further our work by joining Greening Earth Society. ...We're funded by consumer-owned utility companies, concerned citizens, and Western Fuels Association.

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But miracle, initiated by the upper God, is to point Daddy-Mummy at least several hundred times [illegible] connected with the idea which is quite incomprehensible for human beings and can only be explained by God's complete lack of knowledge of the living human being as an organism, that "shit" is to a certain extent the final act, that is to say, when the miracles produce the urge to shit the goal of destroying my person is reached, and so the possibility afforded for a final withdrawal of the rays. Trying to trace the source of this idea one must assume some misunderstanding of the symbolic meaning of the act of defecation, namely that he who entered into a special relationship to divine rays as I have is to a certain extent entitled to shit on all the world.

At the same time, however, the whole perfidy of the policy conducted toward me is clear. Whenever the need to defecate is produced by miracle, some other person in my environment is sent to the lavatory—by exciting the nerves of the person concerned—in order to prevent me from emptying myself; this I have observed so frequently (thousands of times) and so regularly that I can exclude any thought of it being coincidence. The question "Why do you not then shit?" is followed by the capital answer "Because I am somehow stupid." The pen almost resists writing down the fantastic nonsense that God in His blindness and lack of knowledge of human nature in fact goes so far that He presumes a human being could exist who—something every animal is capable of doing—cannot do but for sheer stupidity. When I accompany myself—usually in a bucket because I almost always find the lavatory occupied—this act is always combined with a very strong development of soul-voluptuousness. For that reason all rays have always and without exception been united during evacuation and passing water; and for this very reason, namely to avoid a union of all rays, one attempts (usually unsuccessfully) to miracle away the urge.

I wish to add another point in connection with God's inability to understand the living human being as an organism and to judge his thinking correctly, which has in many ways be- [illegible] I compare this point [illegible] We are the creatures [illegible] are, although [illegible] I myself [illegible] well [illegible] make [illegible] happy [illegible] with [illegible] [illegible] but [illegible] [illegible] God [illegible]

tered into active contact with me exclusively. I became, in a way for God the only human being, or simply the human being around whom everything turns, to whom everything that happens must be related, and who therefore, from his own point of view, must also relate all things to himself.

That God cannot claim infallibility since He entered into a relationship with me which is contrary to the Order of the World, is proved to my satisfaction, as He Himself must have determined the whole policy pursued against me. But I must emphasize again that I do not think that this is in any way irreconcilable with belief in God's eternal wisdom in that sphere of action which is allotted to Him within the Order of the World.

[Story]

TYPING TEST

By Michael Drake and Dike Blair, in the Summer 1999 issue of Purple, *a quarterly magazine published in Paris*

Subject: typing test
Date: Fri, 3 Sep 1999 09:14:57
From: JRash@Parkviewcorp.net
To: (Robert Ball/Vice President)
BBall@Parkviewcorp.net

Dear Mr. Ball:

Perhaps you remember me from last June's interdivisional conference and seminar—I was in charge of analyzing the numbers generated by the productivity skill testing based on the task force recommendations. (You told that funny story about a triple bogey on the twelfth hole at Los Gatos in your presentation, and afterward I told you the ironic numerological significance of the numbers 7 and 12.) I know you are overseeing many committees having to do with the new spiral matrix restructuring of PVC, so let me refresh you. There were problems within the Typing Pool that prompted the implementation of pool-wide random typing tests. The plan was to drop in on the typists and put them through the test. Something just came to my attention that, quite frankly, is beyond me, and I wanted to make sure you had some input into the situation. An employee named Deborah Mydske, a secretary down in Research, turned in a test that just made it to my desk. Although I've had no personal contact with Ms.

Mydske, I am aware of her presence in the department because of her somewhat disruptive effect. Her laughter is so piercing it sometimes penetrates the very walls of my office. The test was one of nine typing tests she took over a three-week period in July. Overall, she put up some of the highest typing numbers in the pool. But on this one occasion, something very strange happened. Each test was a different excerpt from classical literature, and the selection she was supposed to type that day was from Shakespeare. The test follows:

PARKVIEW CORPORATION p/s test
=4a34-09-7/2/99
Employee ID: #56.990

1. Please type as much of the selection as you can in ninety seconds.

Doctors of the Church dance your flails upon my foul flesh. Thrones and Dominions paid in buckets of virgin blood. Oh Master embed your simmering goat seed in me. Fill my belly from the Grand Master's goblet. Mighty dignitaries of the Order drag me hands and knees through the frothing excrement. O Holy Sorceress defenestrate me to your iced rock pit of teeming fractured lust, plunge my womb in sacred meat, sear my rancid digestive stricture with thine afflicted waves. Shutteth off mine former false prosperity to eternity. Call me Scourge. Call me token. Call me excrement of Mithras. I am derision, severed I have mine unclean defenses. Blanket me with ash, bend me over for I am the Holy Fool. The Black Spider. I am the sign

2. Comments: How do you think you did? Are there factors that may have interfered with your taking of this test? If so, explain.

Whew! That was excellent. I think it was my best yet! I felt an amazing burst of energy just as the test started, and, honestly, I'll be surprised if this isn't my best result yet. 'Scintillation plus illumination equals wow.' I feel great.

Let me say that this is not the kind of language that I enjoy reading or sending to you. I checked with Mary Dormand, head of Personnel, and the only report Deborah Mydske has ever had is something I would characterize as a glowing tribute (from Dick Swanson in Research—but Swanson is something of a lady's man, if you know what I mean). I want to avoid the kind of problems we had with last spring's unfortunate litigation based on allegations of sexually explicit e-mail coming from within our department. I thought it prudent to bring this matter straight to your attention. What do you advise? I appreciate your guidance.

A little off the subject, in closing I also want to [illegible]

[Announcement]

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

By [illegible] originally published [illegible] as an [illegible] Department section [illegible] U.S. Department of Justice. It appeared in the October 1995 issue of The Washington Monthly.

To: All EES Personnel
Re: Information About a Colleague

This memorandum is to notify you of a change that will be occurring at EES. One of our trial attorneys, Bob, will be continuing a personal transition that began several months ago. Beginning on August 23, 1999, Bob will be taking a significant step in a medically supervised gender transition when he begins living full time as a woman. Bob has demonstrated his commitment to EES over many years by enthusiastically and skillfully serving as trial counsel, including lead counsel, on some of our most significant cases. We have no doubt that he will continue to perform at that level after he assumes his new identity and his new name of Pamela.

We have invited a representative from EAP's Employee Assistance Program to hold two informational meetings on the subject of gender transition. Anyone in the section is welcome to attend.

I know that some of you people may have [illegible] will concern the use of rest rooms. We have worked out with [illegible] accommodation for this. After August 23, Pamela will only use the women's rest room on the twelfth floor and will place a [illegible] over the [illegible] there. It is my understanding that Pamela [illegible] not intend to use the [illegible] floor [illegible] people.

If anyone has [illegible] concerns about this, I invite them to [illegible] privately to me or with my section manager or with the Employee Assistance Program. Our commitment is to do what we can to support Bob during this transition period and to address this [illegible] in a humane, fair and effective manner. [illegible] for the time

Subject: Re: typing test
Date: Thurs, 9 Sep 1999 _:48:51
From: JRash@Parkviewcorp.net
To: (Edward Rentz/VP Asst.)
Erentz@Parkviewcorp.net

Mr. Rentz:

Of course I realize that Mr. Ball can't "micromanage" this kind of personnel problem, but I hope you'll let him know that I appreciate his time and yours in directing me in this matter. Had I better understood the new PVC directory, I certainly would have addressed the problem to you in the first place. If I "rambled" in my relation of the problem, it was simply to provide Mr. Ball with all the facts in the matter.

As you suggested, I immediately arranged to interview Ms. Mydske. She came in yesterday at 2:30, and she had no idea why I'd called her in. We chatted, had a little small talk, then I just flat-out asked her about the test. I mentioned the date, and very strangely she remembered that the selection was from Shakespeare and that she'd felt "really great" taking the test. So I handed her the test. She started to read it, and within seconds she began to cry. This increased to what I can only term a breakdown. To this emotional display she added screams and rantings of some of the wildest, most outrageous things I've ever heard in my life. This woman went on about all manner of religion and philosophy, physics, you name it. She then started to touch herself and leer at me in ways that I can only describe as sexually provocative. Then she shifted gears and sort of slowed down and started to get teary again. She said that the words from the test were the result of a demon that was trying to take her over, that it was trying to inhabit her. She mentioned a name, but I don't remember it. I think it was in Greek, possibly Latin. She seemed terrified to be talking about it. I mean, I really felt sorry for her. She was really and truly afraid. Then she started on about how important her job was and how she couldn't afford to lose it, etc. I asked her if the "demon" had "taken her over" at any other time during work hours, and she said she didn't think so and that she thought it was getting control over it—that she could prevent other intrusions. I was shocked. I had to have Sally Rhodes, my assistant, take her into the bathroom, calm her down, clean her up, etc.

I wish I could have legally taped this meeting. I contend I want to go on record that I recommend that Ms. Mydske be terminated. I've sent a hard copy of that to Ms. Dormand, and I hope you don't mind that I included my original e-mail and your e-mail response with the recommendation to formally interview her. I wish I could agree with you about having "a sense of humor" about this whole thing, but given the amount of litigation now pending against PVC, I think great caution has to be taken in these matters.

Subject: Re: typing test
Date: Tues, 12 Oct 1999 11:49:01
From: JRash@Parkviewcorp.net
To: (Mary Dormand/Head of Personnel)
Mdorm@Parkviewcorp.net

Ms. Dormand and Employee Review Committee:

I have just received the notice, disclosure documents, and explanation of my enforced "sick leave" pending a review of the situation that I brought to the attention of PVC. I find it somewhat outrageous that a review of my record has been called for, rather than addressing the person who should actually be receiving suspension/disbarment as well as psychiatric attention. This forces me to say that I think something is terribly wrong in your department. I can't believe that you can question whether Deborah Mydske's test (p/s-test. #4a34-09-7/2/99), which has mysteriously vanished from her folder, "ever existed." Although there is no written record, I assure you that we administered nine tests, not eight, to Ms. Mydske. The reason that the number of tests administered to the Typing Pool varies (even though I acknowledge that the other secretaries took eight tests) has to do with the randomness of the administration of the test. I think it is also clear that Matt Frank's lack of memory in this matter is no surprise. He is still trying to blame me for the silliness of the pending harassment suit. Although I don't wish to make an accusation at this time, it is not impossible that Mr. Frank may have something to do with the disappearance of the test. Also the fact that my assistant, Ms. Rhodes, has stated that Ms. Mydske was "upset and frightened" by my behavior on the day of the interview is only natural. Certainly Ms. Mydske would have been inclined to deceive Ms. Rhodes in the women's room rather than admit to her own bizarre behavior. That Ms. Lester, head of the Typing Pool, reports my attentiveness to Ms. Mydske is accurate, that "attentiveness" is implicit in the department-wide change toward a more loosely coupled/lightly integrated approach that was a prominent item on last summer's Mission Statement. As a good manager it was my duty to pay close attention to a disturbed employee. I stand firm, though, in my decision to withhold comment regarding Ms. Mydske's dreadful allegations.



Mouth, *Kleenex pool*, *Un Travaux*, [illegible]

But all of this may be of little consequence as I believe that I now have independent evidence that it is Deborah Mydske who is the "disturbed" employee, not me. I refer you to a story in *The Ledger* dated Aug. 27, 1999, about the removal of a road sign in Moses Lake, Washington (between Seattle and Spokane) by the Department of Transportation for traffic safety reasons. Apparently crowds of people were stopping to view a distasteful image. The article quotes a story published in *Hustler* magazine earlier this summer about an anonymous woman (Ms. M in the article) seeing sodomites cavorting in the image of an "Arby's" sandwich. The magazine notes the date of Ms. M's sighting as 7-2-99 — the same date as Deborah Mydske's typing test!

I hope that a careful review of this evidence will put me back in good standing at PVC and place the blame on the collusion of employees who are either psychologically unfit or are involved in conspiratorial behavior that should not be allowed at PVC.

Please put a hard copy of this e-mail in my review folder.

[Moment]

FLOATING THROUGH LIFE ON A CLOUD OF LOVE

[illegible] *Times-Post* [illegible] Feb. [illegible] *Hustler* [illegible] March [illegible] *Ledger* [illegible] *Travaux* [illegible]

In Sanford's poem, July 7, the weather [illegible] beautiful. [illegible] 1974 to dedicate myself to animal rights, and [illegible] a sculpture named Mimi's Cloud [illegible] Mimi [illegible] happy, but [illegible] tossed about like a poorly anchored boat. [illegible] becoming more [illegible]

[illegible] sculpture over my head, ripping out a piece of my scalp and a handful of hair. Another time he hit me in the stomach with a suitcase and knocked me off balance. I stumbled [illegible] and badly sprained my ankle. He tried to commit suicide by smashing cement [illegible] head. Result: a nice big bump and a bloody forehead. Another time, he rushed into the kitchen and, while the horrified maid looked on, prepared to commit hari-kari with a carving knife.

Such was reality—cruel, unjust, abominable. Outside, it was dark, cold, sad. Once again, I wanted simply to die! Alas, I was out of sleeping pills, so it was a bottle of champagne that got me through the night. It was at this low point that I met my beautiful neighbor, Christina von Opel! Her parents, friends of Papa and Maman, were dead. In love with a madman who used her to sell drugs, this young, beautiful woman had been put under house arrest until the case that would eventually send her to prison went to court. If I loved Christina, I had to go see my dear friend Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and ask him to grant her clemency. Valéry was president of the Republic. He received me at his home. Clearly, he had a lot on his mind, but certainly his worries did not include the irresolvable problem I was going to present him with.

"How's your heart, my dear Brigitte?"

"It's heavy, Valéry, that's why I'm here." And Valéry put his hand on my thigh, assuming that it was a broken heart that had brought me to him. When I told him about Christina and why I'd come, he was visibly shocked!

"But my little Brigitte, this falls under the ministry of justice's jurisdiction! Even I can do nothing for her, or for you."

"Valéry, if you love me even a little bit, do something for her, I beg you." At this point Valéry moved his hand a little farther up my thigh and asked me if there wasn't anything he could do for me instead.

"Do you have enough fuel?" he asked. (This was the year of the fuel shortage, when many people had no heat.)

"Yes, Valéry, thank you, but the only thing you can do for me is to help me get Christina out of prison." And then I stupidly played my last card with President Giscard d'Estaing. My [illegible] nothing would turn [illegible] years [illegible] Why [illegible]

I began the summer of the war. I began every day with my teeth bared. If I had known what was in store for me, I wouldn't have growled so loudly.

Saint-Tropez, March 28. Could it be true? I found myself in a complete stupor. I felt bad, so bad, too bad. She'd been unable to keep swimming. Desperately she'd tried to get out of that trap of a swimming pool with no steps, no incline, no escape. I was drunk with sadness: Nini, my little dog Nini, was dead!

Once again I drank whiskey straight from the bottle. That night, after everyone left, I went out alone on the post road. I went pretty far, under the full moon. The storm had calmed down. The stars were out, and I let my despair explode. I howled at the moon like a wolf. I shouted my grief like a hyena. I hooted like an owl. I beat my head against the pavement like a madwoman. I saw clouds in the shape of Nini passing overhead, and I shouted her name: Nini, my Nini, come back to me, I beg you, I beseech you. Then, prostrate, praying to I don't know which God, I froze stupefied where I was, silent and immobile. My shadow cast by the moon took the form of Nini. She was at my feet, impalpable, untouchable, but present. If I moved, she moved as well, as though we were both alive. I say "as though we were both alive" because after that night I died a little with her and she lives a little through me. Back home, I downed the rest of the whiskey. To be dead drunk! Drunk or dead! What was the difference?

That fall, I left Saint-Tropez with all my dogs and my two favorite cats, Belote and her daughter Roudoudou. My lover, Allain, was at the wheel of his Range Rover. After Lyon, at a "pee-pee stop" for the dogs, Allain said that he had bad news to tell me.

"Well, when you were in Bazoches, after Nini died, that favorite goat of yours, Saturday, died too, no one knows precisely what of. We didn't tell you because we didn't want to add to your grief. And I forgot to tell you until just now."

"You forgot?"

"Yes, I forgot, Brigitte, I have other things to worry about. I have responsibilities—my television shows, my radio shows, my newspaper articles—so your dead goat, well, you understand . . ."

My nerves cracked. This was too much. I began drinking heavily again. I ate nothing.

In spite of myself, I began to develop a distaste for men who pursued me.

My lawyer, M. Bouguereau, invited me to his place on June 7, 1992, to introduce me to a man who said he absolutely had to meet me: Jean-Marie Le Pen. Le Pen and his wife, Jany (who's both ravishing and amusing), were accompanied everywhere by a discreet retinue. I

found Jean Marie Le Pen to be a jovial fellow, funny, interesting, erudite, and sensitive, very different from the way he's usually portrayed. When I was on my way out the door, a hand stopped me, an arm embraced me, a face bent down and kissed my neck, then said, "She's sweet, and she smells good!"

Here in front of me was a gorgeous man whom I hadn't seen previously that night, whose eyes pierced me to the bottom of my soul. In the arms of this stranger, I was hypnotized, nailed to the spot, my heart struck by a force that I couldn't overcome. An electric current suddenly turned those around us to stone; a cosmic silence from the depths of time let us be alone for a minute, face-to-face, united, reunited, tied, inseparable from each other for eternity.

Then suddenly the very posh, very charming voice of Jany Le Pen broke the spell of this first encounter. She apologized for not having introduced us. I was in the arms of Bernard d'Ormale, a friend of the Le Pens.

Slowly, his arms left my body. We started to shake hands, but ended up holding them instead. He continued to gaze deep into my eyes. He walked me in the rain to my old wreck of a pickup truck, of which, for a moment, I felt a little bit ashamed, but he didn't seem to notice. "See you tomorrow," he said.

And I floated away on a cloud, leaving him alone in the pouring rain, tied to me by the love that had possessed us.

[Counsel]

HOPING FOR MEN

Two poems from The World's Wife, *by Carol Ann Duffy, to be published next month by Faber and Faber, an affiliate of Farrar, Straus and Giroux*

CIRCE

I'm fond, nereids and nymphs, unlike some, of the pig,
of the tusker, the snout, the boar and the swine.
One way or another, all pigs have been mine
under my thumb, the bristling, salty skin of their backs,
in my nostrils here, their yobby, porky colognes.
I'm familiar with hogs and runts, their percussion of oinks
and grunts, their squeals. I've stood with a pail of swill
at dusk, at the creaky gate of the sty,
tasting the sweaty, spicy air; the moon
like a lemon popped into the mouth of the sky.
But I want to begin with a recipe for mackerel

which is: the check and the scaling, the gutting, the heft
of that. Lay two pre's cheeks, scaled, on the marble
meat dish, and strew it well over with salt
and cloves. Remember the skills of the tongue
to lick, to lap, to loosen, lubricate, to lie
in the soft pouch of the face—and how each pig's face
was uniquely itself, as many handsome as plain,
the cowardly face, the brave, the comical, noble,
sly or wise, the cruel, the kind, but all of them,
nymphs, with those piggy eyes. Season with mace.

Well-cleaned pigs' ears should be blanched, singed, tossed
in a pot, boiled, kept hot, scraped, served, garnished
with thyme. Look at that simmering lug, at that ear,
did it listen, ever, to you, to your prayers and rhymes,
to the chimes of your voice, singing and clear? Mash
the potatoes, nymph, open the beer. Now to the bums,
to the trotters, shoulders, chops, to the sweetmeats slipped
from the slit, bulging, vulnerable bag of the balls.
When the heart of a pig has hardened, dice it small.

Dice it small. I, too, once knelt on this shining shore
watching the tall ships sail from the burning sun
like myths; slipped off my dress to wade,
breast-deep, in the sea, waving and calling;
then plunged, then swam on my back, looking up
as three black ships sighed in the shallow waves.
Of course, I was younger then. And hoping for men. Now,
let us baste that sizzling pig on the spit once again.

MRS H—

These myths going round, these legends, fairytales,
I'll put them straight; so when you stare
into my face—Helen's face, Cleopatra's,
Queen of Sheba's, Juliet's—then, deeper,
gaze into my eyes—Nefertiti's, Mona Lisa's,
Garbo's eyes—think again. The Little Mermaid slit
her shining, silver tail in two, rubbed salt

I could have told her —look, love, I should know,
they're bastards when they're Princes.

Heroes.

no longer a girl, knowing my own mind,

ready to carry me off at one wrong word,

But the Beast fell to his knees at the door

didn't try to conceal his erection,

watched me open, decant and quaff
a bottle of Château Margaux '54,

I'll tell you more. Stripped of his muslin shirt
and his corduroys, he steamed in his pelt,

the breath of a goat. I had the language, girls.

Do that. Faster. The lady says That's not where I meant.

was *invited*. And it his snout and trotters fouled

Twice.
Meantime, here was his horrid leather tongue

were his hooked and yellowy claws to pick my

to sing off-key all night where I couldn't hear.

Mon.

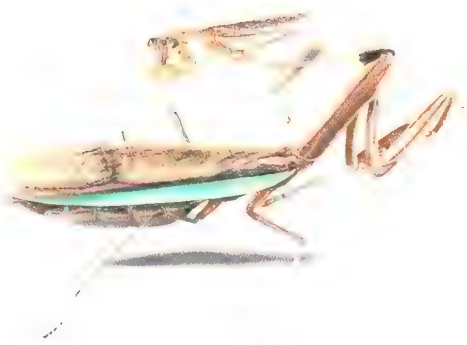
deal

I'd cut, I Seven, and I Stud. Stakes under. Hold 'Em Poker.

I watched Ethelred Frau and Bearded all One night,
a head-to-head between Frau Yellow Dwarf
and Bearded's bride
was over the biggest pot I'd seen in my putt.
The Frau had the Queen of Clubs on the board
and Bearded the Queen of Spades. Final card.
Queen each.
Frau Yellow raised. Bearded raised. Goldilocks'
eyes
were glued to the pot as though porridge bubbled
there.
The Minotaur's wife hit a stinking cheroot. Me,
I noticed the Frau's hand shook as she placed
her chips.
Bearded raised her a final time, then stared,
stared so hard you felt your dress would melt
if she blinked. I held my breath. Frau Yellow
swallowed hard, then called. Sure enough,
Bearded flipped
her Aces over; diamonds, hearts, the pubic Ace
of Spades.
And that was a lesson learnt by all of us—
the drop-dead gorgeous Bride of the Bearded
Lesbian didn't bluff.

But behind each player stood a line of ghosts
unable to win. Eve. Ashputtel. Marilyn Monroe.
Rapunzel slashing wildly at her hair.
Bessie Smith unloved and down and out.
Bluebeard's wives, Henry VIII's, Snow White
cursing the day she left the seven dwarfs, Diana,
Princess of Wales. The sheepish Beast came in
with a tray of schnapps at the end of the game
and we stood for the toast —*Fat Ways*—
then tossed our fiery drinks to the back of our
crimson throats.
Bad girls. Serious ladies. Mourning our dead.

when I got up stairs those tragic girls in my head,
turfing him out of bed; standing alone
on the balcony, the night so cold I could taste
the stars
My breath was a chiffon scarf for an elegant
ghost.
I turned to go back inside. Bring me the Beast
for the night.
Bring me the wine-cellar key. Let the less-
loving one be me.





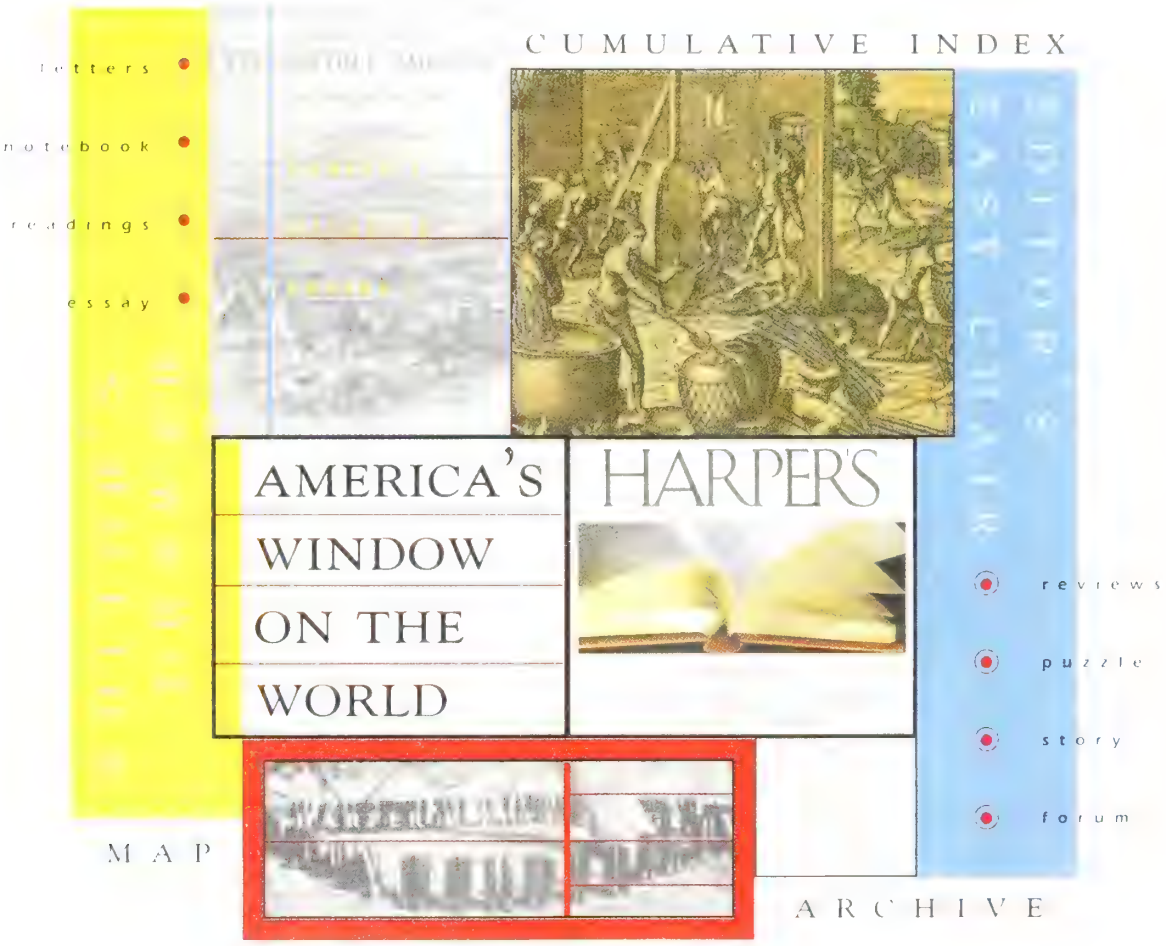








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LET THEM EAT FAT

The heavy truths about American obesity

By Greg Critser

Not long ago, a group of doctors, nurses, and medical technicians wheeled a young man into the intensive care unit of Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center, hooked him to a gangha of life-support systems—pulse and respiration monitors, a breathing apparatus, and an IV line—then stood back and collectively stared. I was there visiting an ailing relative, and I stared, too.

Here, in the ghastly white light of modern American medicine, writhed a real-life epidemiological specter: a 500-pound twenty-two-year-old. The man, whom I'll call Carl, was propped up at a 45-degree angle, the better to be fed air through a tube, and lay there nude, save for a small patch of blood-spotted gauze stuck to his lower abdomen, where surgeons had just labored to save his life. His eyes darted about in abject fear. "Second time in three months," his mother blurted out to me as she stood watching in horror. "He had two stomach staplings, and they both came apart. Oh my God, my boy . . ." Her boy was suffocating in his own fat.

I was struck not just by the spectacle but by the truth of the mother's comment. This was a boy—one buried in years of bad health, relative poverty, a sedentary lifestyle, and a high-fat diet, to be sure, but a boy nonetheless. Yet how surprised should I have been? That obesity, particularly among the young and the poor, is spinning out of control is hardly a secret. It is, in fact, something that most Americans can agree upon. Along with depression, heart disease, and cancer, obesity is yet another chew in our daily rumination about health and fitness, morbidity and mortality. Still, even in dot-com America, where statistics fly like arrows, the numbers are astonishing. Consider:

• Today, one fifth of all Americans are obese, meaning that their body mass index, or BMI, of more than 30. (BMI is a universally recognized cross-measure of weight for height and stature.) The epidemiological figures on chronic corpulence are so unequivocal that even the politically reticent dean of American obesity studies, the University of Alabama's James O. Hill, says that if obesity is left unchecked almost all Americans will be overweight within a few generations. "Becoming obese," he told the *Arizona Republic*, "is a normal response to the American environment."

Greg Critser's last article for Harper's Magazine *was "Our Next Happy Meal: Puberty Paradise, and the Profits of the Drug Companies," which appeared in the June 1999 issue.*

HOW IS IT THAT WE, IN WEALTHY, HEALTH-CONSCIOUS AMERICA, HAVE COME TO PRESIDE OVER THE DEADLY FATTENING OF OUR YOUTH?

• Children are most at risk. At least 25 percent of all Americans now under age nineteen are overweight or obese. In 1998, Dr. David Satcher, the new U.S. surgeon general, was moved to declare childhood obesity to be epidemic. "Today," he told a group of federal bureaucrats and policymakers, "we see a nation of young people seriously at risk of starting out obese and dooming themselves to the difficult task of overcoming a tough illness."

• Even among the most careful researchers these days, "epidemic" is the term of choice when it comes to talk of fat, particularly fat children. As William Dietz, the director of nutrition at the Centers for Disease Control, said last year, "This is an epidemic in the U.S. the likes of which we have not had before in chronic disease." The cost to the general public health budget by 2020 will run into the hundreds of billions, making HIV look, economically, like a bad case of the flu.

Yet standing that day in the intensive care unit, among the beepers and buzzers and pumps, epidemic was the last thing on my mind. Instead I felt heartbreak, revulsion, fear, sadness—and then curiosity: Where did this boy come from? Who and what had made him? How is it that we Americans, perhaps the most health-conscious of any people in the history of the world, and certainly the richest, have come to preside over the deadly fattening of our youth?

The beginning of an answer came one day last fall, in the same week that the Spanish language newspaper *La Opinión* ran a story headlined "Diabetes epidemia en latinos," when I attended the opening of the newest Krispy Kreme doughnut store in Los Angeles. It was, as they say in marketing circles, a "resonant" event, replete with around-the-block lines, celebrity news anchors, and stern cops directing traffic. The store, located in the heart of the San Fernando Valley's burgeoning Latino population, pulsed with excitement. In one corner stood the new store's manager, a young Anglo fellow, accompanied by a Krispy Kreme publicity director. Why had Krispy Kreme decided to locate here? I asked.

"See," the manager said, brushing a crumb of choco-glaze from his fingers, "the idea is simple—accessible but not convenient. The idea is to make the store accessible—easy to get into and out of from the street—but just a tad away from the—eh, mainstream so as to make sure that the customers are presold and very intent before they get here," he said, betraying no doubts about the company's marketing formula. "We want them intent to get at least a dozen before they even think of coming in."

But why this slightly non-mainstream place?

"Because it's obvious . . ." He gestured to the stout Mayan doñas queuing around the building. "We're looking for all the bigger families."

Bigger in size?

"Yeah." His eyes rolled, like little glazed crullers. "*Bigger in size.*"

Of course, fast-food and national restaurant chains like Krispy Kreme that serve it have long been the object of criticism by nutritionists and dietitians. Despite the attention, however, fast-food companies, most of them publicly owned and sprinkled into the stock portfolios of many striving Americans (including mine and perhaps yours), have grown more aggressive in their targeting of poor inner-city communities. One of every four hamburgers sold by the good folks at McDonald's, for example, is now purchased by inner-city consumers who, disproportionately, are young black men.

In fact, it was the poor, and their increasing need for cheap meals consumed outside the home, that fueled the development of what may well be the most important fast-food innovation of the past twenty years, the sales gimmick known as "supersizing." At my local McDonald's, located in a lower-middle-income area of Pasadena, California, the supersize bacchanal goes into high gear at about five P.M., when the various urban caballeros, drywalleros, and jardineros get off work and head for a quick bite. Mixed in is a sizable element of young black kids traveling between school and home,

their economic status apparent by the fact that they are walled in by teacher-driven. Customers are cheerfully encouraged to "supersize your meal!" by signs saying, "If we don't recommend supersize, the supersize price!" For an extra seventy-nine cents, a kid ordering a cheeseburger, milkshake, and small Coke will get said cheeseburger plus a supersize Coke (42 fluid ounces versus 16, with free refills) and a supersize order of french fries (more than double the weight of a regular order). Suffice it to say that consumption of said meals is fast and, in almost every instance I observed, very complete.

But what, metabolically speaking, has taken place? The total caloric content of the meal has been jacked up from 650 calories to more than 1,340 calories. According to the very generous U.S. dietary guidelines, 1,340 calories represent more than half of a teenager's recommended daily caloric consumption, and the added calories themselves are protein-poor but fat- and carbohydrate-rich. Completing this jumbo dietetic horror is the fact that the easy availability of such huge meals arrives in the same years in which physical activity among teenage boys and girls drops by about half.

Now consider the endocrine warfare that follows. The constant bombing of the pancreas by such a huge hit of sugars and fats can eventually wear out the organ's insulin-producing "islets," leading to diabetes and its inevitable dirge of woes: kidney, eye, and nerve damage; increased risk of heart disease; even stroke. The resulting sugar-induced hyperglycemia in many of the obese wreaks its own havoc in the form of glucose toxicity, further debilitating nerve endings and arterial walls. For the obese and soon to be obese, it is no overstatement to say that after supersized teen years the pancreas may never be the same. Some 16 million Americans suffer from Type 2 diabetes, a third of them unaware of their condition. Today's giggly teen burp may well be tomorrow's aching neuropathic limb.

FAST FOOD FRANCHISES ARE LIKE SAN FRANCISCO'S OLD BATHHOUSES—PLACES WHERE HIGH-RISK POPULATIONS INDULGE IN HIGH-RISK BEHAVIOR.



Diabetes, by the way, is just the beginning of what's possible. If childhood obesity truly is "an epidemic in the U.S. the likes of which we have not had before in chronic disease," then places like McDonald's and Winchell's Donut stores, with their endless racks of glazed and creamy goodies, are the San Francisco bathhouses of said epidemic, the places where the high-risk population indulges in high-risk behavior. Although open around the clock, the Winchell's near my house doesn't get rolling until seven in the morning, the Spanish-language talk shows frothing in the background while an ambulance light whirls atop the Coke dispenser. Inside, Mami placates Miguelito with a giant apple fritter. Papi tells a joke and pours ounce upon ounce of sugar and cream into his 20-ounce coffee. Viewed through the lens of obesity, as I am inclined to do, the scene is not so *feliz*. The obesity rate for Mexican-American children is shocking. Between the ages of five and eleven, the rate for girls is 27 percent, for boys, 23 percent. By fourth grade the rate for girls peaks at 32 percent, while boys top out at 43 percent. Not surprisingly, obesity-related disorders are everywhere on display at Winchell's, right before my eyes—including fat kids who limp, which can be a symptom of Blount's disease (a deformity of the tibia) or a sign of slipped capital femoral epiphysis (an orthopedic abnormality brought about by weight-induced dislocation of the femur bone). Both conditions are progressive, often requiring surgery.

The chubby boy nodding in the corner, waiting for his Papi to finish his *café*, is likely suffering from some form of sleep apnea; a recent study of forty-one children with severe obesity revealed that a third had the condition and that another third presented with clinically abnormal sleep patterns. Another recent study indicated that "obese children with obstructive sleep apnea demonstrate clinically significant decrements in learning and memory function." And the lovely but very chubby little girl tending to her schoolbooks? Chances are she will begin puberty before the [illegible]

AWARENESS OF THESE NATIONAL PATTERNS OF SUGAR CONSUMPTION, THE PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES ARE READY WITH UNPRECEDENTED AMOUNTS OF INSULIN



hungry, her into a lifetime of endocrine brittleness that not only will be costly to treat but will be emotionally devastating as well. Research also suggests that weight gain can lead to the development of pseudotumor cerebri, a brain tumor most common in females. A recent review of 57 patients with the tumor revealed that 90 percent were obese. This little girl's chances of developing other neurological illnesses are profound as well. And she may already have gallstones—obesity accounts for up to 33 percent of all gallstones observed in children. She is ten times more likely than her non-obese peers to develop high blood pressure, and she is increasingly likely to contract Type 2 diabetes, obesity being that disease's number-one risk factor.

Of course, if she is really lucky, that little girl could just be having a choco-sprinkles doughnut on her way to school.

What about poor rural whites? Studying children in an elementary school in a low-income town in eastern Kentucky, the anthropologist Deborah Crooks was astonished to find stunting and obesity not just present but prevalent. Among her subjects, 13 percent of girls exhibited notable stunting; 33 percent of all kids were significantly overweight; and 13 percent of the children were obese—21 percent of boys and 9 percent of girls. A sensitive, elegant writer, Crooks drew from her work three important conclusions: One, that poor kids in the United States often face the same evolutionary nutritional pressures as those in newly industrializing nations, where traditional diets are replaced by high-fat diets and where labor-saving technology reduces physical activity. Second, Crooks found that "height and weight are cumulative measures of growth . . . reflecting a sum total of environmental experience over time." Last, and perhaps most important, Crooks concluded that while stunting can be partially explained by individual household conditions—income, illness, education, and marital status—obesity "may be more of a community-related phenomenon." Here the economic infrastructure—safe playgrounds, access to high-quality, low-cost food, and transportation to play areas—was the key determinant of physical-activity levels.

Awareness of these national patterns of destruction, of course, is a key reason why Eli Lilly & Co., the $75 billion pharmaceutical company, is now building the largest factory dedicated to the production of a single drug in industry history. That drug is insulin. Lilly's sales of insulin products totaled $357 million in the third quarter of 1999, a 24 percent increase over the previous third quarter. Almost every leading pharmaceutical conglomerate has like-minded ventures under way, with special emphasis on pill-form treatments for non-insulin-dependent forms of the disease. Pharmaceutical companies that are not seeking to capture some portion of the burgeoning market are bordering on fiduciary misfeasance. Said James Kappel of Eli Lilly, "You've got to be in diabetes."

Wandering home from my outing, the wondrous smells of frying foods wafting in the air, I wondered why, given affluent America's outright fetishism about diet and health, those who see business it is to care—the media, the academy, public-health workers, and the government—do almost nothing. The answer, I suggest, is that in almost every public-health arena, the need to address obesity as a class issue—one that transcends the inevitable divisiveness of race and gender—has been blunted by bad logic, vested interests, academic cant, and ideological chauvinism.

Consider a story last year in the *New York Times* detailing the rise in delivery-room mortality among young African-American mothers. The increases were attributed to a number of factors—diabetes, hypertension, drug and alcohol abuse—but the primary factor of obesity, which can foster both diabetes and hypertension, was mentioned only in passing. Moreover, efforts to understand and reduce these excess deaths—the factors of the deaths have been thwarted. When Dr. Janet Mitchell, a New York obstetrician charged with

reviewing several recent maternal mortality studies, insisted that socioeconomics were the issue in understanding the "racial gap" in maternal mortality, she was unable to get government funding for the work. "We need to back away from the medical causes," she told the *Times*, clearly exasperated, "and begin to take a much more ethnographic, anthropological approach to this tragic outcome."

In another example, a 1995 University of Arizona study reported that young black girls, who are more inclined toward obesity than white girls, were also far less likely to hold "bad body images" about themselves. The slew of news articles and TV reports that followed were nothing short of jubilant, proclaiming the "good news." As one commentator I watched late one evening announced, "Here is one group of girls who couldn't care less about looking like Kate Moss!" Yet no one mentioned the long-term effects of unchecked weight gain. Apparently, when it comes to poor black girls the media would rather that they risk diabetes than try to look like models.

"That's the big conundrum, as they always say," Richard MacKenzie, a physician who treats overweight and obese girls in downtown L.A., told me recently. "No one wants to overemphasize the problems of being fat to these girls, for fear of creating body-image problems that might lead to anorexia and bulimia." Speaking anecdotally, he said that "the problem is that for every one affluent white anorexic you create by 'overemphasizing' obesity, you foster ten obese poor girls by downplaying the severity of the issue." Judith Stern, a professor of nutrition and internal medicine at UC Davis, is more blunt. "The number of kids with eating disorders is positively dwarfed by the number with obesity. It sidesteps the whole class issue. We've got to stop that and get on with the real problem."

Moreover, such sidestepping denies poor minority girls a principal, if sometimes unpleasant, psychological incentive to lose weight: that of social stigma. Only recently has the academy come to grapple with this. Writing in a recent issue of the *International Journal of Obesity*, the scholar Susan Averett looked at the hard numbers: 44 percent of African-American women weigh more than 120 percent of their recommended body weight yet are less likely than whites to perceive themselves as overweight.[1] Anglo women, poor and otherwise, registered higher anxiety about fatness and experienced far fewer cases of chronic obesity. "Social stigma may serve to control obesity among white women," Averett reluctantly concluded. "If so, physical and emotional effects of greater pressure to be thin must be weighed against reduced health risks associated with overweight and obesity." In other words, maybe a few more black Kate Mosses might not be such a bad thing.

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH EATING DISORDERS IS POSITIVELY DWARFED BY THE NUMBER WITH OBESITY.

While the so-called fat acceptance movement, a very vocal minority of super-obese female activists, has certainly played a role in the tendency to deny the need to promote healthy thinness, the real culprits have been those with true cultural power, those in the academy and the publishing industry who have the ability to shape public opinion. Behind much of their reluctance to face facts is the lingering influence of the 1978 bestseller *Fat Is a Feminist Issue*, in which Susie Orbach presented a nuanced, passionate look at female compulsive eating and its roots in patriarchal culture. But although Orbach's observations were keen, her conclusions were often wishful, narcissistic, and sometimes just wrong. "Fat is a social disease, and fat is a feminist issue," Orbach wrote. "Fat is not about self-control or lack of will

[1] *Certainly culture plays a role in the behavior of any subpopulation. Among African-American women, for example, obesity rates persist despite increases in income. A recent study by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute concludes that obesity in black girls may be "a reflection of a differential social development in our society" which [illegible] need to elapse between an era when food availability [illegible] fluctuate with no such concern." Other observers might argue that "social development" is code for being heavy from black men's preference for fat women. Such assertions do not change mortality statistics.*

r. . . . It is a response to the inequality of the sexes."

order, and it one is, for the most part, affluent, well-educated, and politically aware. But obesity itself is preeminently an issue of class, not of ethnicity,

Latinos, in African Americans, and even in some Pacific Island Amer-

teans, poor Latinos, poor whites, poor women, poor children, poor Latino chil-

versely associated with household income as well as with parental education."

cial thinkers. Instead, the tendency of many in the academy is to fetishize or "postmodernize" the problem. Cornell University professor Richard Klein, for

Klein's mother-in-law and almost died from sleep-induced overeating. Klein to re-

future of the nation. The concern grew directly from late-nineteenth-century health issues in French cities and the countryside, where tuberculosis had winnowed the nation's birth rate below that of the other European powers. To

ucate young mothers about basic health and nutrition practices. Long before Americans and the British roused themselves from the torpor of Victorian chub, the French undertook research into proper dietary and weight controls for the

rates (and birth weights) picking up, the puériculture movement turned its attention to childhood obesity. Feeding times were to be strictly maintained; random snacks were unhealthy for the child, regardless of how "natural" it felt for a mother to indulge her young. Kids were weighed once a week. All meals were to be supervised by an adult. As a result, portion control—perhaps the one thing that modern obesity experts can agree upon as a reasonable way to prevent the condition—very early became institutionalized in modern France.

French child rearing, and as a result France has a largely lean

searchers, clinicians, academics, and government health officials charged

ted individuals in this group, one wonders just how independently minded they are. Among the sponsors for the 1997 annual conference of the North American Association for the Study of Obesity, the premier medical think tank on

and, never to be left out, Slim Fast Foods. Another sponsor was Knoll Pharmaceuticals, maker of the new diet drug Meridia. Of course, in a society

Olympic games, sponsorship hardly denotes corruption in the most trad-

ership in the realm of childhood illness. Founded in 1956, the President's Council on Youth Fitness was originally launched to combat poor health in all youth and established a series of awards for those who excelled in the effort. The council spoke about obesity with a matter-of-fact tone: "Overweight is the most serious problem today, with such potential consequences." There were no balances; it was "stylishly stout" and "Hey kid, if you see yourself in this picture, you need help."

By the late 1980's and early 1990's, however, new moral currents had undermined the council's power to set moral and cultural standards. The overt tolerance of cultural relativism led to a growing reluctance to be blunt about fatness, and aided and abetted by the fashion industry's focus on baggy, hip-hop style clothes, it became possible to be "stylishly stout." Fatness, as celebrated on rap videos, was now equated with wealth and power, with identity and agency, not with clogging the heart or being unable to reach one's toes. Both inner-city black kids and the suburban kids copying them are even more disabled by their obesity. The only people who benefit from kids being "fat" are the ones running and owning the clothing, media, food, and drug companies.

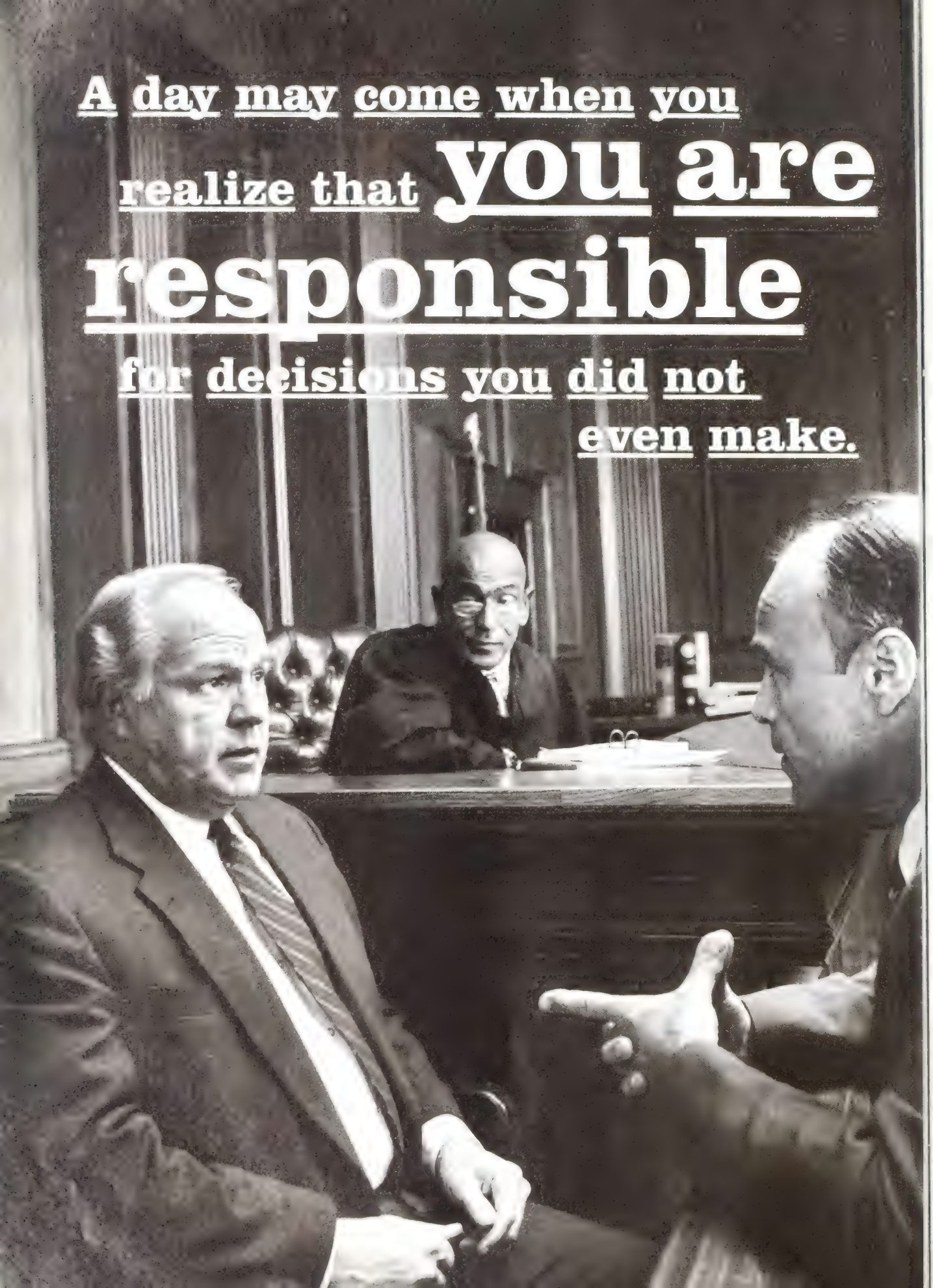
In upscale corporate America, meanwhile, being fat is always a sure-fire career-killer. If you can't control your own contours, goes the logic, how can you control a budget or a staff? Look at the glossy business and money magazines with their cooing profiles of the latest genius entrepreneurs: to the man, and the occasional woman, no one, I mean *no one*, is fat.



Related to the coolification of homeboyish fat—perhaps fostering its new status—is the simple fact that it's hard for poor children to find opportunities to exercise. Despite our obsession with professional sports, many of today's disadvantaged youth have fewer opportunities than ever to simply shoot baskets or kick a soccer ball. Various measures to limit state spending and taxing, among them California's debilitating Proposition 13, have gutted school-based physical-education classes. Currently, only one state, Illinois, requires daily physical education for all grades K-12, and only 19 percent of high school students nationwide are active for twenty minutes a day, five days a week, in physical education. Add to this the fact that, among the poor, television, the workingman's baby-sitter, is now viewed at least thirty-two hours a week. Participation in sports has always required an investment, but with the children of the affluent tucked away either in private schools or green suburbias, buying basketballs for the poor is not on the public agenda.

Human nature and its lazy inclinations aside, what do America's affluent get out of keeping the poor so fat? The reasons, I'd suggest, are many. An unreconstructed Marxist might invoke simple class warfare, exploitation fought through stock ownership in giant fat-food firms. The affluent know that the stuff will kill them but need someone (else) to eat it so as to keep growing that retirement portfolio. A practitioner of vulgar social psychology might argue for "our" need for the "identifiable outsider." An economist would say that in a society as overly competitive as our own, the affluent have found a way to slow down the striving poor from inevitable nipping at their heels. A French semiotician might even say that with the poor the affluent have erected their own walking and talking "empire of signs." But I'm not sure any of this is perhaps not so far-fetched. For what do the fat, darker, exploited poor, with their unbridled primal appetites, have to offer us but a chance for we thin, shape-conscious folk to live vicariously? Call it boundary envy. Or, rather, boundary-free envy. And yet, by living outside their boundaries, the poor live within ours, fat people do not threaten our way of life; their very existence, in flesh, they are shewed, they are softened, they are [illegible].

Meanwhile, in the City of Fat Angels, we lounge through [illegible] epidemic. Mama buys another apple fritter. Papa slams [illegible] cream. Another young Girl supersizes and double-supersizes [illegible] again. Waistlines surge. Any minute now, the belt will run out [illegible]. ■


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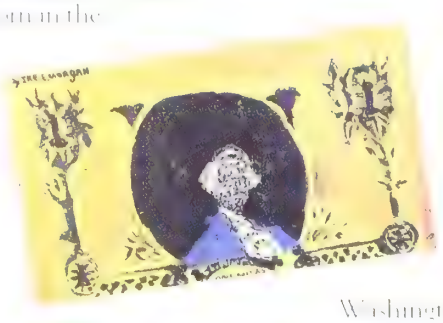
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IKE AND LYNDON

Portrait of the artist and the president

By Charles Bowden

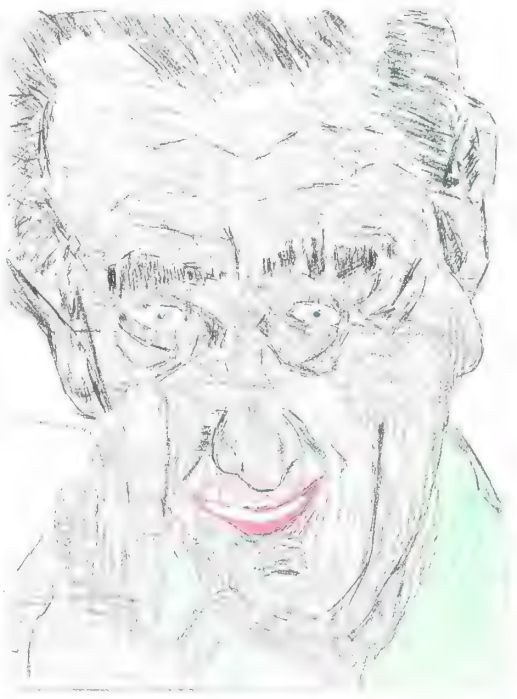
He knew all their faces, Washington from memory, the other presidents from books, and he's been nailing them with pastels, tempera, pencil sketches, and oils since the late 1970s. Sometimes he identifies them—Jackson, Washington, Lincoln, and the like—sometimes not. But mostly he just lays their faces out there and lets you see. After all, they're former presidents of the United States of America. His name is always the same: Ike Edward Morgan.



He was born in the [illegible] He started painting there in the Sixties. He got out in the early Seventies, [illegible] the state. Since 1972, he has lived right there in the [illegible] mental hospital, and he works all day long. He rises early in the morning and around 7:30 [illegible] hospitality is the word. [illegible] to say hello, and then is off to work. When the fever [illegible] really on him, he may [illegible] out [illegible] presidents. He paints always presidents, but the presidents are the ones that first [illegible] Harry S. Truman, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Lyndon Baines Johnson, Abraham Lincoln, Dwight David Eisenhower, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and [illegible] the Unknown Soldier. Art [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] Ike finds paper, canvas, or cardboard, and begins [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

on Waxahachie about a half block from the courthouse square where a monument to the brave men who one that ripped this nation open and spilled its guts out, you know, Mr. Lincoln's war — stands tall and proud in the shape of a Confederate soldier at attention forever in the stone ranks of the lost cause. I need a wad of this orange mouthwash I am using to me in the morning and scream out Charlie Parker riffs at midnight.

I amble over to this big table and rifle through piles of Ike Morgan's paintings — down in Austin the state of Texas has had to rent space to store Ike's work, since he is a working tool and the state has been in charge of him since 1977 — and there is Lyndon Baines Johnson. I'd already seen Ike's black Richard Nixon, with red lips, intense blue eyes, and a green background that looks electric. But Lyndon is special, he's part of what I've come for. I got up one day and had a notion: that in the state mental hospital in Austin, Texas, one Ike Edward Morgan, diagnosed psychotic, was capturing the color and fury and song—well, some of the song, since Ike is an eight-track man loyal to the musical technology loose in the republic at the time he was locked up — and love and history of my times as we grind and stagger into yet another millennium. And that a mile or two or three from Ike in a huge white building — a monstrous thing that looks, honest to God, like some white whale that beached itself deep in the heart of Texas, a presidential library that opened in the early Seventies to the howls of 2,000 protesters and the only one of the eleven that has no admission charge — Lyndon is rising from his long black night, shaking his big-eared head, brushing those damned yellow rose petals off his britches, and coming awake after all those years of JFK worship, after the ringing in his ears from punks like me shouting, [illegible] MANY KIDS DID YOU KILL TODAY? getting up as the American presidency toddles through the Clinton years after crawling through the Bush years and spending what out of kindness we might call the Dreamtime of the Reagan years. Lyndon's arising, clearing his throat, and letting loose with a yowl that cuts right through the cloud of Prozac hanging over the republic like the scream of a mountain lion coming off the peak in the night, and we snap alert and realize that after this cavalcade, once captured in paint by Ike Morgan — this cavalcade of Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton — Lyndon Baines Johnson, the man who took us to Nam in a handbasket, the man described by George Reedy, his own presidential press secretary, in this way: "Were there nothing to look at save LBJ's personal relationships with other people, it would be unnecessary to forget him altogether. But there is much more to look at. He may have been a son of a bitch, but he was a colossal son of a bitch . . ." Well,



[illegible] Johnson [illegible] John Kennedy [illegible] went down in Dallas November 22, 1963, with a legislative program that had been largely frozen since he took office, and by June 1964 LBJ had begun to ram 40% bills through the U.S. Congress. The man was compulsive. When we put the boots to him, and he went back to his ranch on the Pedernales, he told his friends, "I want each of you to make a solemn pledge that you will not go to bed tonight until you have [illegible] every step he ever took. We [illegible] chance of producing [illegible] this country that we work [illegible] selves to the bone. And if you [illegible] leaving one we [illegible] [illegible] mistress on the country [illegible] mean working every minute of every day." Yessssssssssir.

[illegible] nightmare—that Lyndon Baines Johnson was [illegible] and [illegible] Johnson's [illegible] and mother of Hubert Horatio Humphrey [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] dential library a few miles from where Ike Morgan [illegible] [illegible] there essentially [illegible]

Except go

VIETNAM RAP ARTISTS
WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 1964

LBJ: Got lots of troubles.

[illegible]: Well, we'll get all those.

LBJ: What do you think of this Vietnam thing? I'd like to hear you talk a little bit.

Hardly got JFK underground and the family moved in, and hell's a-popping all over the place. Because it always is that way around Lyndon Johnson. Most presidents leave office and disappear into the boredom served up by American historians, a native class of the enfeebled. But not our boy Lyndon. I'm up in the stacks, 36 million documents all snoring in red boxes on black shelves, the air holding steady at seventy degrees, the humidity an even 50 percent, so that the Vietnam War can endure and rage on here for centuries. All the voices still talk here, because Johnson, that tricky son of a bitch, taped everybody who talked to him. He just forgot to tell them about it. On one tape he wants to get out front on this Negro issue—especially being a southern man and all that—so he's going to appoint Carl Rowan, newspaper guy, to replace Edward R. Murrow as the head of the United States Information Agency. But Johnson knows he's got to slide this appointment through John McClellan's Senate committee, and he knows that McClellan of Arkansas is a stone cold segregationist. So he picks up the phone on January 16 and says, "John, I've got a little problem. I don't want to embarrass you in any way, and the best way to avoid it is talk to you beforehand so you know what the problem is. Mr. Ed Murrow is dying with cancer of the lung. . . . I've got a good solid man that's went around the world with me. . . . But he's a Negro. . . ."

McClellan says evenly, "I doubt if I'm going against this. You do what you want to."

But Johnson is having none of this. "I know what your problems are," he offers. "I don't want you to cut his guts out because he's Negro. And I've seen you operate with a knife and I have seen you people get de-nutted."

McClellan, well, hell, he's a United States senator, and that sounds like a bit much to him, he says. "I would not've say that."

Johnson fires back, "I didn't want you to . . . send him home one day without his peter."

"I'm not going to do that."

"I've seen you operate, John."

Harry Middleton worked for Johnson as a speechwriter from 1966 to 1969, when everything was falling apart. Now he runs the LBJ presidential library. But what he doesn't really do now is make key decisions to open up the tapes. There are 9,500 recordings, half open already, the rest will be unsealed over the next few years. When Middleton first decided to open them, he didn't know what was in them—they were a "pig in a poke," he says.

But he wanted them opened on his watch.

Because he had to know that if anything was going to bring Lyndon Johnson back from the historical trash can, it had to be his voice operating, doing deals, and bullying a nation to his will.

Live oak, thin soil, and blue sky cover the land, and under the hill country, just below the skin, is the rock, and when ground is abused the soil flows away and rock slaps the world in the face. Fine limestone gates frame entryways to big ranches hidden in the trees, and then the fist of the hill country takes over, and lonely trailers or houses on piles pop up and goats chew the ground. The sign outside the smokehouse says YOUNG ROASTING PIGS. Down the road a taxidermist touts white-tail mounts with limited lifetime warranties. Just outside Johnson City, a dead raccoon lies by the road. LBJ's hometown is a hamlet of 1,100 souls selling pop and lunch to the straggling visitors to the dead god. The earth cries out for strong drink and gets Baptist churches. This is the place where white people learned to sink into the blues.

A sign at the LBJ National Historical Park gives a brief outline of the world he long ago found in these green soft hills of cactus, trees, and thin soil: NO FLUMBING, NO ELECTRICITY. . . . NO PLACE TO BUY A LOAF OF BREAD OR A POUND OF MEAT. Just down the street is Johnson's boyhood home, a white clapboard thing with a swing on the porch and not much else (it's bigger inside than it looks, a park guard advises).

Fifteen miles or so to the west, LBJ sleeps in his family's burying ground, and the hills roll on, and come spring and some rain the wildflowers bloom and his ranch, the one he bought in the Fifties with the loot that befalls a senator, looks like the way life ought to be. You come from this kind of place, and you stay hungry. In the Fifties, when LBJ was Senate majority leader, he prided himself on getting one of the early car phones, and then one day it rang while Johnson was out rolling around and it was Everett Dirksen, the Senate minority leader, calling up to tell Lyndon he'd just got a car phone. Johnson cut him off with an excuse me, I have to go, since my other car phone is ringing. Johnson could never get enough love, enough applause, enough of anything, and his hunger made millions dislike him. When his body lay in state in the white whale of a library in Austin he'd built to guard his reputation, Harry Middleton assigned a guy to count just how many people went by the coffin. When asked at the time why in the hell this mattered, he said, "Because I know that somewhere, sometime, President Johnson's going to ask me."

I stand there in the bright sun and let the

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So he became a college teacher and wound up at the library doing oral history. In a real sense, he's spent a quarter century or so in Saigon.

Looking into this thing called Lyndon Johnson, Gittinger says, "I lost friends. He lost my war. But I'm not bitter. I just didn't have the heart to go on and do any job in the military. We weren't going to win, and I didn't want to be the last guy killed in Vietnam."

So he goes over and over this war, especially that tape with those Vietnam rap artists Ice LBJ and Senator Richard Snoopy Dogg Russell, and he's left with, well, they meant well, and yet everything got fucked up.

Downstairs a guard tells me that one thing he learned on this job is to never ask Vietnam vets about Johnson.

I ask why.

"Because a lot of them don't like him."

Gittinger doesn't feel that way, but still he's not all that settled on the war yet. He thinks maybe forty years from now scholars will get a better head on it, that things will sort of calm down once guys like him and me die. Because for a whole bunch of us, whether vets or goddamn protesters, it just doesn't seem to end. He eyes me and says, "You know how you can tell a bullet's close? You hear this whump, that's from air filling the hole as it goes by you."

So we talk inside Johnson's tomb about this monster named LBJ. Part of what neither of us ever saw coming was that this paranoid, overbearing, egotistical braggart would overwhelm our defenses by abandoning his own.

LBJ is the dead man talking.

Later, Gittinger walks me away from this cacophony of voices into the outside pavilion and points to the blooming mountain laurels.

"Smell it," he encourages me.

I do.

"What's it like?"

I say it reminds me of a whiff off a time cheap whore.

He smiles and offers, "Grape Kool-Aid."

I hear Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze" imagine in my head, and, yes, we are trying to become mature.

Sometimes, late at night, or at least I want it to be late at night, Ike Morgan dips into the money he earns from selling his artwork and orders up a pizza or some burgers, or best of all, some chicken wings. And they deliver them to the Texas state mental hospital in Austin, and it all tastes so good. Afterward he'll have a Camel or, if he's trying to save up for his art supplies, he'll roll a little Bugler and have a smoke and relax. Because it's damned hard to have over two centuries of presidents of the United States pouring through your hands. Not to mention various singers and movie stars and other children of the Lord.

Here the official barometer of the United States the man who left the Bronx street in 1972, the eight-track man, the fellow who can hardly remember anytime before 1974, or at least one day in April of 1977. And yet he does portraits of all these presidents, and some of them more than once, obscure probably not even their wives could name to mind their scent or face. That's the hell of it for the LBJ. You're set to be done of the world, and then you die, and then it's another millennium and I'm in a tech point in Austin put a plane ride or two or three from that huge LBJ presidential library, and I ask the twenty-three-year-old bartender what she thinks of LBJ, and she says, "I don't really know much about him, but I suspect he had some dome on the Fallout of Kennedy."

But Ike Morgan does. Even on his portrait of LBJ, and the lips are very red, red like lipstick, and the eyes very blue. And the face is black.

I think of another Texan I went to school with back in the Sixties at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He'd been recruited in Texas by the CIA to fight the Communists, and then served in Europe as a representative at various international student things and then one day, re the war in Vietnam got hotter and hotter and more and more bloody. He'd come home, he'd thought, what in the hell am I doing? And then he came home.

> KENNEDY IS AMERICA'S MASK, SAID DE GAULLE, BUT JOHNSON IS THE COUNTRY'S REAL FACE

I met him afterward, when the news from Vietnam was especially black, and he was walking near the campus, and some guy was walking toward him and laughing and having a perfectly fine time, and he snapped then and looked at the handsome guy and punched him in the mouth. And then walked on without saying a word.

I remember another time I was at a student faculty type meeting and the war was raging and the South was still unsettled over civil rights and a professor made some statement that sounded to me like we all have our differences over the war but that doesn't mean we have to hate each other. When he finished, one of my fellow students stood up and said, "Fool, we have come to everything south of Canada for Mister Rapp."

And I didn't think that was true, but that wasn't what caught my notice. It was that every single person at that meeting knew exactly what he meant.

I was one of those wayward academic types who bumbled through the war as a student deferment, but I can still smell the cordite in the air and feel the breath of the draft on the back of my neck. The Beatles were losing ground, and the Stones were coming on, and I was one who listened to *Let It*

WE BURIED IKE ALIVE IN OUR INSTITUTIONS, AND NOW HE GIVES US OUR PRESIDENTS

[illegible] I remember going to a drive-in movie in like '67 with a friend who had no time for college and he didn't go, and it is a James Bond movie to [illegible] action and women with large breasts, and in the morning he'll go for his physical, but no matter, he's been there before and his ticket is not so good. So we're drinking 40-ounce jugs of beer, because they're damn cheap, and pissing by the car, because this is not too fancy a drive-in, and no one is worried, because they always look into his heart and send him home. And he goes down the next day and that is the last I see of him for two years.

David Edington remembers sitting on the plane that was going to take him across the pond to Vietnam and somebody had a radio on and just as they began to take off the damn thing played "Leaving on a Jet Plane."

It got like that at times.

◆

How important is it to us?

It isn't important a damn bit, with all these new missile systems.

Well, I guess it's important to us . . . from a psychological standpoint.

I'm listening to these goddamn tapes, and it is a Thursday, June 11, 1964, and LBJ is again talking on the phone to Senator Richard Russell of Georgia, a man who loved the Constitution and fought against civil rights, and LBJ is whining about Vietnam, and this at a time when Kennedy is hardly cold in the ground and the rest of us can't find the place on the map, and LBJ wails, "I'm confronted. I don't believe the American people ever want me to run. If I lose it, I think they'll say I've lost it. . . . At the same time, I don't want to commit us to a war. And I'm in a hell of a shape."

Senator Russell offers, "We're just like a damn [illegible] over a fence out there in Vietnam."

Ah, but Lyndon says, "I've got a study being made by the experts . . . whether Malaysia will necessarily go and India'll go and how much it'll hurt our prestige if we just got out . . ."

All this talk going on without me, going on before I knew where such countries were, going on even before I popped out of the cunt at the Bond movie and pissed into the desert night. An Ike was in the White House and hadn't entered into his room with [illegible] and his tools in history.

We love periods, order, sequence. I'm standing in Waxahachie with Bruce and Julie Webb, going through piles of Ike Morgan's art. Waxahachie is an Assembly of God town—Jerry Lee Lewis once studied theology here before being seized by great balls of fire—and Bruce's grandparents settled here after missionary work in India. When they died, he and Julie came here to find space for their passions. They fit in fine. Bruce signed up with the Masons and Odd Fellows—and created this sanctuary for Outsider Art. Ike, as it happens, began with a Dumpster Period. This covered the years when he'd scrounge behind the hospital in the trash for something to draw on—pieces of cardboard boxes, covers torn off tablets, sheets of paper. A lot of the paintings have leaves stuck to them, a reality for the Outside Artist. There also is a period when he drew noses in a particular way, and then these series would come, sometimes explained by a book that came his way and sometimes not explained at all. Right now, for example, Ike is heavily into an homage to Dr. Seuss. And Sarah Bernhardt. Unlike many artists, Ike draws without a concern for the market, and, unlike just about any other dealers, Bruce and Julie never suggest he make something the market wants.

Ike's life has apparent order in two places: inside their gallery, with its carefully filed, loved, and preserved artworks; and inside that big blue book that David Edington sometimes consults, the one stuffed with twenty-odd years of reports and notes on the case of Ike Edward Morgan.

All of my life I've had trouble with order, knowing it was a way to make sense out of things and yet sensing it was a way to squeeze the life out of things. For decades Ike and Lyndon have been trapped in their madness, and we've said we couldn't make heads or tails of them. Ike stayed stashed in the state hospital, Lyndon buried in the tomb of a library he threw up in Austin. Inside, a huge glass wall opens up to the stacks of documents like a window into a brain, and I've stood there staring in at the millions of pieces of paper, all those voices, and I've leaned forward and could almost hear them shouting and screaming in their desperate effort to make themselves heard through the thick glass that keeps them in their place.

Douglass Cater, one of Johnson's presidential assistants, remembers how he had these newswire machines in the Oval Office—the kind with a roll of paper, keys flying like hell, and the whole thing inside a soundproof cabinet—and LBJ would get up during meetings and go over and stare through the glass and see what was going on in the world, and then, if it really caught his eye, he'd open up the cabinet and "disappear down into the bowels of the thing to read it as it was actually being typed out on the spindle. He wanted to get even farther ahead of the news before it could surface." I tell you, you can hear voices in this library. Sometimes I've thought that the place needs a dumpster artist, an Outsider Artist.

And then, with the assist of the tape from the back seat of LBJ's limo, the voice came out of the jumpsuit and began to twist and bout, and there were, bent down to hug shoulders, face painted with peace symbols, and lip-sticked across his forehead is the word [illegible], and he's crooning in that cool cat way of his:

When the mother packed the lunch
And all the goodbyes were said
Don't you think it's much better to love
Don't you think it's much better to love
You better start soul-kids to love

None of those presidents like Morgan is making us face, not a one, ever got there by being shy and retiring. But still there is something about Johnson's ego that puts your basic power-junkie self-centered man-in-the-presidency in the shade. On January 8, 1964, LBJ had given his first State of the Union address, and that afternoon he called a big muckety-muck national columnist to get his reaction. His operators found the man traveling in North Dakota.

Johnson discovered the columnist had not even heard the speech, so he told him, "I got eighty-one applauses, in 2,900 words. It was a twenty-five-minute speech, and it took forty-one, because of the applauses . . ."

And the horse you rode in on, too.

◆

LBJ: *I'm afraid that's right. I don't think the people of the country know much about Vietnam, and I think they're in a hell of a lot less . . .*

RUSSELL: *Yeah, I know, but some of us and certain lot of our boys out there . . .*

LBJ: *Yeah, that's right. That's exactly right. That's what I'm talking about. You get a ton. We had thirty-five killed—and we got enough hell over thirty-five—this year.*

RUSSELL: *More than that . . . in Atlanta, Georgia have been killed this year in automobile accidents.*

LBJ: *That's right, and eighty-three went down in one crash of a 707 in one day, but that doesn't make any difference . . . .*

He knows things a lot of us don't. On Saturday, April 9, 1977, Ike Morgan, age eighteen, was told to do some cleaning by his grandmother, Margurite, sixty-two. It was Saturday night, and she went into the bathroom wearing her nightgown to take a bath. The baby-sitter was over from next door to look after Ike's younger brothers and sisters. They heard some

Letters on Napkin . . . Sometimes I Cry . . . We Can't Stop the Music . . . Don't Stop . . . Hurry Up . . . Let's Have Some Fun . . . Let's Have a Party . . . Let's Dance . . . Let's Shout . . . Hully Gully . . . Put the Music Louder . . . Hey Look Me Over . . . Let's Hang On . . . Stay . . . She Loves You . . . Yeah, Yeah, Yeah.



but she didn't like some rough . . . When he . . . bringing me up . . . how nice and sweet . . . Some of the nicest days I've ever had."

And then he . . . and Tracy . . . The murders of his grandmother . . . Ike Morgan . . . and he . . . years have record him . . . in the mirror . . . he continues . . . know." And then . . . he found . . . "gave me more reason to be strong, and that's all . . .

He's showing . . . two legs and . . . a worm, some turtles. In the left-hand corner is a bush with . . . Ike's . . . between . . . this . . . the . . . gift of speech . . . and form and gives us our presidents.

The . . . Ike . . . and . . . Ike . . . but . . . and . . . crime . . . When they . . . grandmother in the bathroom, blood was running out . . . under the door.

I turn I hit a truck stop outside [illegible] Interstate and stopped there because he was heading west and going east was against the grain. There he'd been for months, sober now, with a .44 Magnum in his lap as he headed his Peterbilt toward L.A. It was the early 1980s, and Ike was deep into his art by then, going out back of the hospital to scavenge paper and cardboard from the hamper for his art supplies. London was locked in his own mind and pretty much forgotten except for biographers who periodically dug him up and flogged him with whips made in Saigon. Once in a while Republicans had at him and made the phrases Great Society and War on Poverty sound like something you did back of the barn with a sheep.

My truck driver was quiet at first, and then he fell into those black hours after midnight—carefully studying each freeway overpass for snipers—and he returned to Saigon. He'd gone during the white heat of the war, 1967, and the next thing he knew he was an Ohio farm boy looking out the back door of a chopper as a gunner. A fellow in black pajamas was under him looking up, the pilot was barking into his ears through headphones, and he hesitated on the trigger and then cut the guy in black pajamas in half. After that, he told me, it got kind of automatic, and then a year later the U.S. military dropped him back into Ohio as if it had never happened. He remembered walking around the yard at his folks' farm with his mother, and how [illegible] and he felt a sudden there [illegible] and he felt himself down in the mud. He may have had the look in his mouth [illegible] all wet and caked with mud.

[illegible] Hemingway. He read [illegible] the Garden of Eden to help get out. A few weeks later he was at Kent State and heard gunshots [illegible] to roll with [illegible] favorite cargoes, and he kept an apartment in [illegible] place, but he made damn sure he had a home and damn sure it was in the heart of the country.

[illegible] off my office and introduced himself as a baby [illegible] as a field hand, enlisted to get a footing in the U.S. [illegible] in Cambodia cutting throats in the midnight hour.

When he got back to the world and walked off the plane in Oakland, a woman spat at him and he took her name. Told me it was a relief. He said his wife would find him sometimes slumped in the corner of the bedroom weeping. He loved baseball.

And there were people talking guns and explosives over the beer and wine in the Stones. Finally the heroin hit and then the coke, and the whole time vanished, slipped away except for the wounds. And I'm left standing on Austin with a presidential library and a presidential artist.

◆

[illegible] *It's a crazy situation. It's just one of those places where you can't win. Anything that you do [illegible] I have thought about it. I have worried about it. I have prayed about it.*

[illegible] *I don't believe we can do anything.*

RUSSELL: *It frightens me 'cause it's my country in [illegible] over there, and if we get into there on a considerable scale there's no doubt in my mind but that the Chinese will be in there and we'd be fighting a danged conventional war. . . .*

[illegible] *You don't have any doubt but what it was go[ing] there and get 'em up against the wall, the Chinese Communists are gonna come in?*

[illegible] RUSSELL: *No sir, no doubt about it.*

There is something about George Washington that touches Ike Morgan. "I like the first one more than the other ones—the vision of him. He's too nice looking, the scenery of him." And so he does him over and over and sees him with a red face, a purple-brown face, an orange face, and a black face. We can't see Washington at all. He's not a man or a face or a form; he's a blur as we hand over the money, a cartoon on our currencies.

He has created his own new constitution out of his own hand lessons from life. "If you don't try," Ike offers, "you'll never know what can happen anyway. Keep hanging in there. If there wasn't folks people helping out, I don't know if I'd be here today. You just gotta be yourself. I can't do what everybody says to do—you gotta figure out what is right to do and make a decision and stick to it."

And then he turns back to his drawing and adds eyes to the rabbit.

"Go to a restaurant, get yourself a bite to eat. Get away. Do something special, you know. Early in the morning you're in see wildlife pass through. Good to go bicycling. When the sunlight comes out, that is just enough. It keeps the body warm."

He sketches in a crescent moon in the upper left-hand corner.

"Sometimes people need moonlight."

Everything about the war is simpler now and it seems like a detail that it devoured LBJ's presidency, his reputation, denied

[illegible] second term, and chose Hurricane Creek to [illegible] Texas, where he built his library, grew out his hair, and went to his grave looking like some deranged street person. Now the ground is shuddering as he comes back up into a world that thinks a virtual war like Operation Desert Storm is the real thing.

Jesus, it is evening on April 30, 1964, and Johnson is on the horn with Robert McNamara, his brainy secretary of defense, and he's pissed about reports from this Vietnam.

"Let's get some more of something, my friend," he offers, "because I'm going to have a heart attack if you don't get me something. . . . We need somebody over there that can get us some better plans than we've got, because what we've got is what we've had since '54. We're not getting it done. We're losing."

McNamara almost intones his brief reply: "I know it."

Great, the fucking secretary of defense knows he is losing a war in a place only he and a handful of State agents know exists.

"Tell those damn generals over there," Johnson orders, "to find one for you, or you're going to go out there yourself."

And McNamara picks right up on the boss's mood and says, "That's one reason why I want to get back. A kick in the tail a little bit will help."

That's the spirit, that's the can-do shit that LBJ wants to hear. But he makes sure McNamara understands when he says, "What I want is somebody that can lay up some plans to trap those guys and whup hell out of them and kill some of them."

Nail that damn commie to the wall, you hear?

And while he's straightening out this Vietnam mess, the damn generals bogged down like some old truck in the mud, while he's getting that all ironed out, he's fiddling with the biggest civil rights act in the history of these United States, and deep into the longest goddamn filibuster in the history of the U.S. Senate, a southern choke hold on the bill that will ramble on seventy-seven days before Lyndon Baines Johnson, that Southern Man, stops it dead in its tracks and signs the bill into law.

Besides that, he's got this War on Poverty he wants to win, and he's fired up to kick Barry Goldwater's ass in the fall election, and he's just gotten the country out of a winter of mourning for JFK, and he's trying to figure out a way to ship Bobby Kennedy to some outer darkness, and if all that ain't enough, he needs some britches.

So on August 9, 1964, at about 1:16 P.M. he gets Joseph Haggar Jr. of The Haggar Company on the phone and says, "You-all made me some real light slacks. . . . Now, I need about six pairs for summer wear."

And, by God, Mr. Haggar says, "Yes, sir."

But that [illegible] moment [illegible] the United States must sometimes stand naked, but that he must [illegible] him, and [illegible] your nuts hang, is always a little too tight. . . . Give me an inch that I can let out there, because they cut me. They're not like [illegible]

And now you want to [illegible] and [illegible] rising, those yellow roses of Texas petals are [illegible] and he's coming back, the president who's [illegible] womanizing, hell, that he had more [illegible] got on purpose, the man who [illegible] White House locks and what's that [illegible] you're saying about a cigar? The man who took us to Saigon and Mississippi and Bed-Stuy, the guy who got into all our business at [illegible] stuff about only a few people [illegible] coming back, nearly extinct.

He hesitated on the trigger, then cut the guy in black pajamas in half

It's around 8:35 P.M. on Tuesday, August 4, 1964, and his wife, Lady Bird, calls this monster up, and he says: "Darling."

And she says: "Yes, Lyndon?"

And he says: "I'd just want to [illegible]"

And she says, "I just wanted to see you whenever you're all alone, merely to tell you I loved you. That's all."

And Lyndon Baines Johnson says, "I'll be over there."

•

[illegible]

I [illegible] Lyndon [illegible] the [illegible] Hamm [illegible] Hammond [illegible] ed, "I'm clean, I'm clean." The cop said evenly and [illegible]

You can't be clean around Johnson. He got [illegible]

He's talking, man's always talking, and it's [illegible] about [illegible] to Secretary [illegible]

counts, Mississippi, and they're talking about a woman named Fannie Lou Hamer of Ruleville, and my ears get big because I knew Fannie Lou Hamer. She was a piece of work, a woman I've thought about most of my life because when I choke I think, well, hell, she did not choke, and sometimes when I think that I fire up enough nerve to push on. She and her husband lived in a shack, and when I sat there I could look at a wall and see daylight coming through the cracks. She was the second daughter of a sharecropper and just about drove Lyndon Johnson and James Eastland crazy. For a while she worked for SNCC (the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) organizing and helping black people to register to vote, a project Senator Eastland never fit into his schedule. One day in June 1963, just about a year before Johnson and Eastland chatted on the phone, she walked into a whites-only restaurant in Winona, Mississippi, and got jailed and the hell beat out of her. Folks would fire into her shack from time to time. But she never gave in and by June of 1964 had welded together something called the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and was fixing to show up at Lyndon Johnson's convention in Atlantic City and demand the seats of the traditionally lily-white delegation, the one Senator Eastland was so torn between. Also three civil rights workers had vanished in Mississippi two days earlier on a Sabbath.

LIKE THAT OTHER GREAT PRESIDENT, ELVIS PRESLEY, LBJ WENT TO FLESH IN THE END

So Johnson says, "Jim, we got three kids missing down there. What can I do about it?"

"I don't know," Eastland grumbles. "I don't believe there's three missing. I believe it's a publicity stunt."

Another time Eastland says, "I hope you know that some of these bombings where no one's hurt are publicity stunts. This Negro woman in Ruleville [Fannie Lou Hamer] that's come to Washington and testified that she was beaten nearly to death by some Negroes, anybody that's been beaten nearly to death sometimes is going to get hurt."

But Johnson presses on. He's friendly, but he wants to get a grip on what's happened with these missing civil rights workers, though he doesn't know they've already been buried in a dam. He's in fine form, asking Eastland about the weather and commiserating with Eastland about the heat. Then Eastland offers the insight, "It'll take a crowd to make three men disappear."

And LBJ says, "That depends on the kind of men, Jim. . . . It might take a big crowd to take three like you. I imagine it wouldn't take many to capture me."

And they go on like that bantering back and forth—the boys, you know—and I remember being there four years later, sitting in Fannie Lou Hamer's shack, being there after the dead boys were dug up and the civil rights bill was made law, after the big changes, and still it was lively, hell. Martin Luther King had just been murdered up the road in Memphis. But what I notice is that call from Eastland ends and immediately Johnson is on the phone with J. Edgar Hoover, and Hoover says they found the car and it's burning so hot they can't peek in to see if there are bodies. And then—bam—Eastland is back on the line, and he says he talked with the governor of Mississippi and the governor "expects them to turn up with bruises and claiming that somebody's whipped 'em. He doesn't believe a word of it."

Johnson drops the big one by saying, "Now here's the problem, Jim. Hoover just called me. . . ."

Eastland bleats, "Well, I know nothing about that."

I really hated Johnson back then, and I'm not sure I've mellowed much as I listen in and hear Mrs. Hamer come up and remember those Mississippi days and nights. But I have to notice, as I listen to the tapes, that the filibuster is grinding out and the man is always on the goddamn phone and the government, that rude beast, is awakening.

And you can't be here and stay clean.

This ain't no disco. This is work, and work is not necessarily what you have been told. It must be done, these things in the head must be born, be given color and form. Life has its drives. "Life is not building up too much stress," Ike advises. "Sometimes I wake up and I decide I'm gonna do something nice for someone. They say you don't want to do work, well, then why eat. All you do is art, they say. And it is good to eat." And then he pauses, he is still working on his Dr. Seuss drawing, then continues. "You know how some days are, all day out in the yard playing with water. Sometimes in life you just can't draw. And sometimes you can stay behind it."

When the weather is good, he likes to work outside, get away from the gray-feeling building with light green concrete walls, dull linoleum floors, and the weight of government, the dimly lit halls, and the doors that open freely to get inside but are locked when you try to go outside, to the pastoral grounds with big trees and grass imprisoned by the whir of traffic on each side.

So Ike Morgan takes his stuff out to the concrete picnic table, the one all splattered with paint from his work, and he'll be at it for hours. Sometimes David Edington will see him out there in the wind with four different paintings held

own by garbage-can lids, and Ike'll be bent over working on a fifth.

Like that other great American president, Elvis Presley, LBJ went to flesh in the end. After he left office and moseyed back to the ranch, he kind of seemed to give up on things. His hair grew out, and the people around him didn't quite know what to make of him and his new do. A man with a bad ticker, he started smoking a couple of packs a day, boozing into the wee hours on that Cutty Sark and hitting the Night Hawk diner on South Congress in Austin, gobbling up burgers. One day in January 1973, he showed up at his presidential library to talk to an aide, Mildred Stegall. Johnson looked like hell, ashen pink and gray, and he had the air of a dying man. He told her how to take care of the many tapes he made of phone calls and meetings when president—they should be sealed for fifty years, and some of them should be never opened. A week or so later he died at the ranch, and Stegall sealed the material, as instructed, until 2023. This decision was later overruled for various reasons, including fear of public lawsuits, and because it was pretty clear Johnson really did want everyone to finally listen in on him. Just after the library opened, Harry Middleton tried to censor some stuff, and Johnson roared, "Good men have been trying to save my reputation for forty years and not a damn one's succeeded."

But what strikes me is Johnson's attitude that January day as he gave his weary orders with his long white hair curling down to his shoulders. He had the air of a dead man walking, a man who didn't care. Whereas the Kennedy library close by Harvard gives us history as a veneer and never mind the garter belts, Johnson's joint is serving up history with the bark on. Just before his big library had opened, he'd noticed that the museum section didn't have any hate mail, and, by God, he was a world-record beater in the hate-mail department. So Lyndon Johnson, disappointed by examples dug up by his staff archivists, waded into the millions of pieces of correspondence himself looking for the meanest letter "I ever got." He finally settled on a postcard from Linden, California, that read: "I demand that you, as a gutless sonofabitch, resign as President of the United States." So it went on display.

Vietnam could do that to you. David Edington remembers finally finishing his tour in Nam and riding home with a planeload of other guys. Just before they made it to Seattle, the pilot come on the intercom and told them to get all sharp objects out of their pockets and to tuck their heads down because the landing gear refused to come down.

What Edington remembers of the planeload of guys finally coming home is that they all figured they'd die in the attempt. But [illegible] gave a damn. Not one guy. The plane [illegible] quiet and serene as they glided toward [illegible]

Listen up now. This is simple. Even movies are okay just as long as you remember they're not true. That's what Ed Morgan advised me, and he's seen true. Been and come back from it. And second, we've got to stop dismissing people, because the hour is getting late, we've blown out all the candles on the last thousand years, and Saigon won't go away and neither will Lyndon. He's pulled the hat trick. No, not the War on Poverty; they said that didn't work even though it did. No, not the Civil Rights Act, that worked so damn well everybody forgot what a bitch life was before it got passed. And forget the Great Society; everyone else has. What is bringing Johnson back is the past served up raw and bloody. John Kennedy, he's got his Harvard center tending to the holy remains and ducking every time an old squeeze shows up, but Johnson, he figured out something better than all the spin masters, all the pet house historians, all the loyal lying retainers a man could muster. He stockpiled the greatest show on earth, brutal and bawdy power lashing against our hides like a whip.



And he's coming back from his tomb. He's pulled that wooden stake from his heart just about the time we've wearied of focus groups, false piety, and clambering about looking under the bed. We've lost our appetite for Rhodes scholars and are a little more open to Outsider Artists, to the self-taught, to the guys who have been there.

Ike and Lyndon are back with their reports. And it's not the way we think it should be, and it is not polite, and it is not always pretty. So come down the lane of pain and take a look. Good morning, millennium. Time to [illegible] bones. The weather forecast today is [illegible]

Ready or not.

◆

RUSSELL: *It's one of those things where it heads I win, tails you lose.*

LBJ: *Well, think about it, and I'll talk to you again. I hate to bother you, but I just—*

RUSSELL: *I wish I could help you. God knows I do, 'cause it's a terrific quandary that we're in over there. We're just in the quicksands up to our very necks. And I just don't know what the hell is the best way to get [illegible]*

LBJ: *Hello, operator? Hello, calling you.* ■

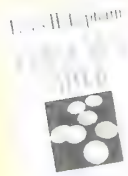
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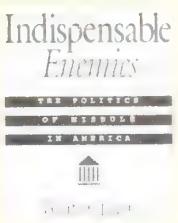
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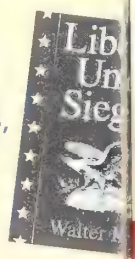


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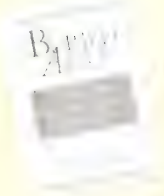
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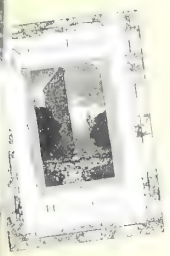
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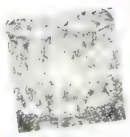
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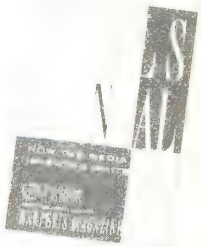
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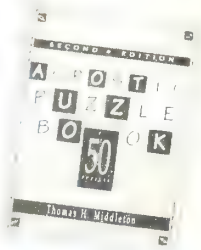
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MUSIC IS MY BAG

Confessions of a lapsed oboist

By Meghan Daum



Picture a fifteen-year-old boy with the early traces of a mustache who leaves school in the band room after school playing the opening bars of a Billy Joel song on the piano, and who, in an unsuccessful attempt at a period style, wears a fedora hat and a scarf decorated with a black-and-white piano keyboard. Here is the boy who, upon deciding to have taught himself certain tunes from the *Songs in the Key of Life* sheet music he bought at the local Sam Ash, probably plays the trombone in the marching band, and also no doubt experienced a seminal moment one afternoon as he [illegible] flirted with a not-yet-kissed clarinet-playing girl, a girl who [illegible] but whose propensity for leaning on the piano as she plays the opening chords of "Captain Jack" clued him in to the fashion-statement and social possibilities of the marching band.

If the clarinet-playing girl is an average student musician, she carries her plastic Selmer in the standard-issue black plastic case. If she has demonstrated only limited proficiency she carries the Selmer in a corduroy drawstring sack that reads [illegible]. She [illegible] the piano seat [illegible] and [illegible] the hat, the Billy Joel, and the euphonium [illegible] and [illegible] takable world of Music Is My Bag.

[illegible] my parents' house were covered with framed art posters from musical events: the San Francisco Symphony's 1982 production of *Mahler's Passion*, the Metropolitan Opera's 1976 production of *Aida*, the original Broadway production of *Sunday in the Park with George*. Seven percent of the books on the shelves were about music, if not actual musical scores. Childhood ceramics projects made by my brother and me were painted with eighth notes and treble clef signs. We owned a deck of cards with portraits of the great composers on the back. A baby grand piano overtook the room that would have been the dining room if my parents hadn't forgone a table and renamed it "the music room." This room also contained an imposing hi-fi system and a $300 wooden music stand. Music played at all times: Brahms, Mendelssohn, cast recordings of Sondheim musicals, a cappella Christmas albums. When my father sat down with a book he read music scores, humming quietly and tapping his foot. When I was ten my mother decided we needed to implement a before-dinner ritual akin to saying grace, so she composed a short song, asking us all to contribute a lyric, and we held hands and sang it before eating. My lyric was, "There's a smile on our face and it seems to say / the wonderful things we've all done today." My mother insisted on harmonizing at the end. She also did this when singing "Happy Birthday."

Harmonizing on songs like "Happy Birthday" is a clear indication of the Music Is My Bag personality. If one does not have an actual bag that reads [illegible] as did the violist in the chamber music trio my mother set up with some women from the Unitarian Church—a $300 music stand will more than suffice. To avoid confusion, let me also say that there are many different Bags in life. Some friends of my parents have a $800 drafting stand, a collection of silver

bookmarks, and once threw a dinner party wherein the guests had to dress up as members of the Bloomsbury group. These people are Literature Is My Bag. I also know people who belong to Movies Are My Bag, they are easily detectable by key chains shaped like projectors, outdated copies of *Halliwell's Film Guide*, and one too many T-shirts from obscure venues like the San Jose Film Festival. Cats Are My Bag people are too well-known to require explanation, and the gaudiness of their paraphernalia—the figurines, coffee-table books, and refrigerator magnets—tends to give the category dominance over the slightly more subtle Dogs Are My Bag. Perhaps the most annoying Bag is Where I Went to College Is My Bag: Yale running shorts, plastic Yale tumblers, Yale Platinum Visa cards, and, yes, even Yale screen savers on all in someone pushing forty, the perennial contributor to the class notes.

Having a Bag connotes the state of being overly interested in something yet, in a certain way, not interested enough. It has a hobbyish quality to it, a sense that the enthusiasm developed at a time when the person was lacking in some significant area of social or intellectual life. Music Is My Bag is the mother of all Bags, not just because in the early 1980s some consumer force of the public-radio-fund-drive variety distributed a line of tote bags displaying that slogan but because its adherents—or "music lovers," as they tend to call themselves—give off an aura that distinguishes them from the rest of the population. It's an aura that has to do with a sort of benign cluelessness, a condition that even in middle age smacks of that phase between prepubescence and real adolescence.

Music Is My Bag people have a sexlessness to them, a pastiness. They can never seem to find a good pair of jeans. You can easily spot them on the street: the female French horn player in concert dress hailing a cab to Lincoln Center at around seven in the evening, her earrings too big, her hairstyle unchanged since 1980. The fifty-something recording engineer with the running shoes and the shoulder bag. The Indiana marching band kids in town for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, snapping photos of one another in front of the Hard Rock Cafe, having sung their parts from the four-part arrangement of *Hava Nagila* nonstop all the way on the bus, thinking it's a song that it won't get any better than this. Like all Music Is My Bag people, they're not too much in love with trappings and memorabilia, save for the certificate of participation from regional festivals, the composer-a-month calendars, the Mostly Mozart posters. Their sincerity trumps all attempts at snideness. The boys' sarcasm falls short of irony, the girls will never be great seducers. They will all grow up to look like high school band directors no matter what profession they choose, with pets named Wolfgang and Gershwin and hemlines that are never quite right.

I played the oboe, which is not an instrument to be taken lightly. The oboist runs a high risk of veering deeply into Music Is My Bag, mostly because getting beyond the entry level requires an all-or-nothing approach to technique that can render a person vulnerable to certain vagaries of the wind ensemble subculture, which inevitably concerns itself with the sociopolitical superstructure of the woodwind section. Within this subtype, the oboist faces the twin temptations of narcissism, in contemplating the disproportionate number of solo passages written for the oboe, and pride, because it is she who sounds the A that tunes the orchestra.

The oboe is a difficult instrument, beautiful when played well, horrible when played poorly. Yet even when it produces a lovely sound, it is not an instrument for the vain. The embouchure puckers the face into an unnatural grimace, an expression well documented in the countless photographs from my childhood that suggest some sort of facial deformity: the lipless girl. Then there is the question of moisture. Oboe playing revolves almost entirely around saliva. Spit gets caught in the keys and the joints and must be blown out using cigarette rolling paper as a blotter (a scandalous drugstore purchase for a twelve-year-old girl). Spit accumulates on the floor if you play for too long. Spit must be constantly sucked out of the delicate tip of the reed. Fragile and temperamental, the reed is the oboe player's chronic medical condition. [illegible]

[illegible]

Although I did, at one point, hold the title of second-best high school player in the state of New Jersey, I was a mediocre oboist. My discipline was lacking, my enthusiasm virtually nil, and my comprehension of rhythm (in keeping with a lifelong math phobia) held me back considerably. But being without an aptitude for anything was in my family, tantamount to being a Kennedy who knew nothing of politics. Aptitude was a remembrance, perhaps even the only thing I possessed. As indifferent to the oboe as I was—and I once began an orchestra rehearsal without notice that I had neglected to screw the bell, the entire bottom portion, onto the rest of my instrument—I seemed to be good enough to play in the New Jersey All-State High School Orchestra, as well as in the Eighth Grade Honor Orchestra, Honor Symphony, Concert Orchestra, Honor Symphony, Advanced Orchestra, Honor Symphony, Symphonic Orchestra, Honor Symphony, Conservatory Orchestra, Honor Symphony, Accomplished Orchestra, Honor Symphony, Senior Orchestra, Honor Symphony, Graduate Orchestra, Honor Symphony, Graduate Orchestra, Honor Symphony, Graduate

and *everyone* will hear. Everyone.

My parents' presence at a high school orchestra concert turned what should have been a routine event into something akin to the finals of the Olympic women's figure skating competition. Even from the blinding floodlit stage I could practically see them in the audience, clucking at every error, grimacing at anything even slightly out of tune. Afterward, when the other parents—musically illiterate chumps—were patting their kids on the head and loading the tuba into the station wagon, I would receive my critique. "You were hesitating in the second part of the Haydn Variations." "You overanticipated in the Berceuse section of the Stravinsky." "Your tone was excellent in the first movement but then your chops ran out." My brother, who was forced for a number of years to play the French horn, once was reduced to a screaming fight with our father in the school parking lot, the kind of fight possible only between fathers and sons. He'd bumbled too many notes, played out of tune, committed some treasonous infraction against the family reputation. My father gave him the business on the way to the car, exerting the alto curses of a fourteen-year-old, pages of music everywhere, an instrument case slammed on the pavement.

This sort of rebellion was not my style. I cried instead. I cried in the seventh grade when the letter telling me I'd been accepted to the North Jersey Regional Band and Orchestra arrived three days late. I cried in the tenth grade when I ended up in the All-State Band instead of the orchestra. I cried when I thought I'd given a poor recital (never mind that the audience thought I was brilliant—all morons), cried before lessons (underprepared), cried after lessons (sentenced to a week of reviewing the loathsome F sharp étude). Mostly, though, I cried during practice drills supervised by my father. These were torture sessions wherein some innocent tooting would send my father careening downstairs from his attic study, screaming, "Count, count, you're not counting! Jesus Christ!" Out would come a pencil, if not an actual conductor's baton, and he would begin hurting the music stand, forcing me to repeat the tricky fingerings again and

gan, speeding up the tempo so that
. Be sure to hit each note when we
ok it back down to real time. These
sions would last for hours, my mouth
rseless shaking, tears welling up from
gue and exasperation. If we had a
opy of the piano part, my mother
ould play the accompaniment, and
gether my parents would bark com-
ands: "Articulate the eighth notes
ore. More staccato on the tonguing.
on't tap your foot, tap your toe inside
our shoe." The postman heard a lot of
ats. The neighbors heard all of it. At
r practicing we'd eat dinner, but not
efore that song: "There's a smile on
ur face, and it seems to say all the
onderful things . . ." "Good practice
ession today," my mother would say,
shing out the casserole, WQXR's
ymphony Hall playing over the
itchen speakers. "Yup, sounding pret-
y good," my father would say. "How
about one more go at it
before bed?"

My mother called my oboe a
horn." This infuriated me. "Do you
ave your horn?" she'd ask every single
morning. "Do you need your horn for
school today." She maintained that this formula was technically correct, that music notes on a "horn" was anything onto which reeds were blown. My oboe was a $84 conservatory-grade, high-grade black granadilla with sterling silver keys. It was not to be confused with such semantic atrocities as Music Is My Bag, the overambitious statement that reveals desperate need for identity affirmation, the musical equivalent of people in the magazine business who refer to publications like *Glamour* and *Forbes* as "books." As is indicated by the use of "horn," there's a subtly macho quality to Music Is My Bag. The persistent insecurity of musicians, especially classical musicians, fosters a kind of jargon that would be better confined to the military or major league baseball. Cellists talk about rock stops and rosin as though they were comparing canteen belts or brands of glove grease. They have their in jokes and aphorisms: "The Rock Stops Here," "Eliminate Violins in Our Schools."

I grew up surrounded by phrases like "rattle off that solo," "nail that lick," and "build up your chops." "Chops" is a word that should be invoked only

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

[illegible] Music Is My Bag will [illegible] in her heart that she should become a [illegible] grade Rodgers and Hammerstein [illegible] parents would say when the junior high drama club puts on a production of *Grease*. "is not appropriate for this group." Even in the throes of adolescence, Music Is My Bag will love adolescence. Even at [illegible], she will hold her ears when the rock music gets loud, saying it ruins her sense of overtones, saying she has sensitive ears. Like a retiree, she will classify the whole genre as nothing but a bunch of noise, though it is likely that she is a fan of Yes.

During the years when I was a member of the New Jersey All-State Orchestra, I would carpool to rehearsals with the four or so other kids from my town who made All-State every year. This involved spending as much as two hours each way in station wagons driven by people's parents, and, inevitably, the issue of music would arise: what music would be played in the car? Among the most talented musicians in school was a girl named Elizabeth Ostling, who was eventually hired as the second flutist for the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the age of twenty-one, and at the age of fifteen was unaccountably possessed by an enthusiasm for the Christian singer Amy Grant. Next to Prokofiev and the Hindemith Flute Sonata, Amy Grant occupied the number one spot in her tuneful, late-blooming heart. Since Elizabeth's mother, like many parents of Bagsters, was devoted solely to her daughter's [illegible] academic career, she did most of the driving to such boony spots as Chatham High School, Monmouth [illegible] and Long Branch Middle School, Manalapan, New Jersey, [illegible] while Elizabeth [illegible] Amy Grant's "Father's Eyes" and "Wait for the Healing" on full blast. [illegible] twenty-five of New Jersey's best students [illegible] to hear Elizabeth [illegible] Amy Grant.

[illegible] Mr. Stuart's theory [illegible] Music Is My Bag [illegible] trouble from purses, knapsacks, and totes; [illegible] Music Is My Bag will [illegible] Wall-mart and A.P. math homework and Trapper Keeper notebooks featuring the piano-playing Schroeder from the *Peanuts* comic strip. When we paused for dinner I would embark on oboe maintenance, putting the reed in water, swabbing the instrument dry, removing the wads of wax that, during my orthodontic years, I placed over my front teeth to keep the inside of my mouth from bleeding. Just as I had hated the entropy of recess back in grade school, I loathed the dinner breaks at All-State rehearsals. To maximize rehearsal time, the wind section often ate separately from the strings, which left me alone with the band types, the horn players and percussionists who wore shirts with slogans like "Make Time for Halftime." They'd wolf down their sandwiches and commence with their jam session, a cacophonous white noise of scales, finger exercises, and memorized excerpts from their hometown marching numbers. During these dinner breaks, I'd generally hang with the other oboist. For some reason, this was almost always a tall girl who wore sneakers with corduroy pants and a turtleneck with nothing over it. This is fairly typical Music Is My Bag garb, though oboists have a particular spin on it, a spin characterized more than anything by lack of spin. Given the absence in most classical musicians of a style gene, this is probably a good thing. Oboists don't accessorize. They don't wear buttons on their jackets that say "Oboe Power" or "Who Are You Going to Time To?"

There's high-end Bagdom and low-end Bagdom, with a lot of room in between. Despite my parents' paramilitary practice regimens, I have to give them credit for being fairly high-end Baggers. There were no piano-key scarves in our house, no "World's Greatest Trombonist" figurines, no plastic tumblers left over from my father's days as assistant director of the Stanford University Marching Band. Such accessories are the mainstay of the lowest tier of Music Is My Bag, a stratum whose music is Pop Rock, whose theme song is "Piano Man," and whose typical representative is the kid in high school who plays not only the trumpet but the piano, saxophone, flute, tuned bass-concert bells, and wood block. This kid, considered a wunderkind by his parents and the rest of the band community, plays none of these instruments well, but the fact that he knows so many different sets of fingerings, the fact that he has the potential to earn some college money by performing as a one-man band at the annual state teachers' conference makes him a hometown hero. He may not be a football player. He may not even gain access to the Ivy League. But in the realm of Music Is My Bag, the kid who plays every instrument, particularly when he can play Billy Joel songs on every instrument, is the alpha male.

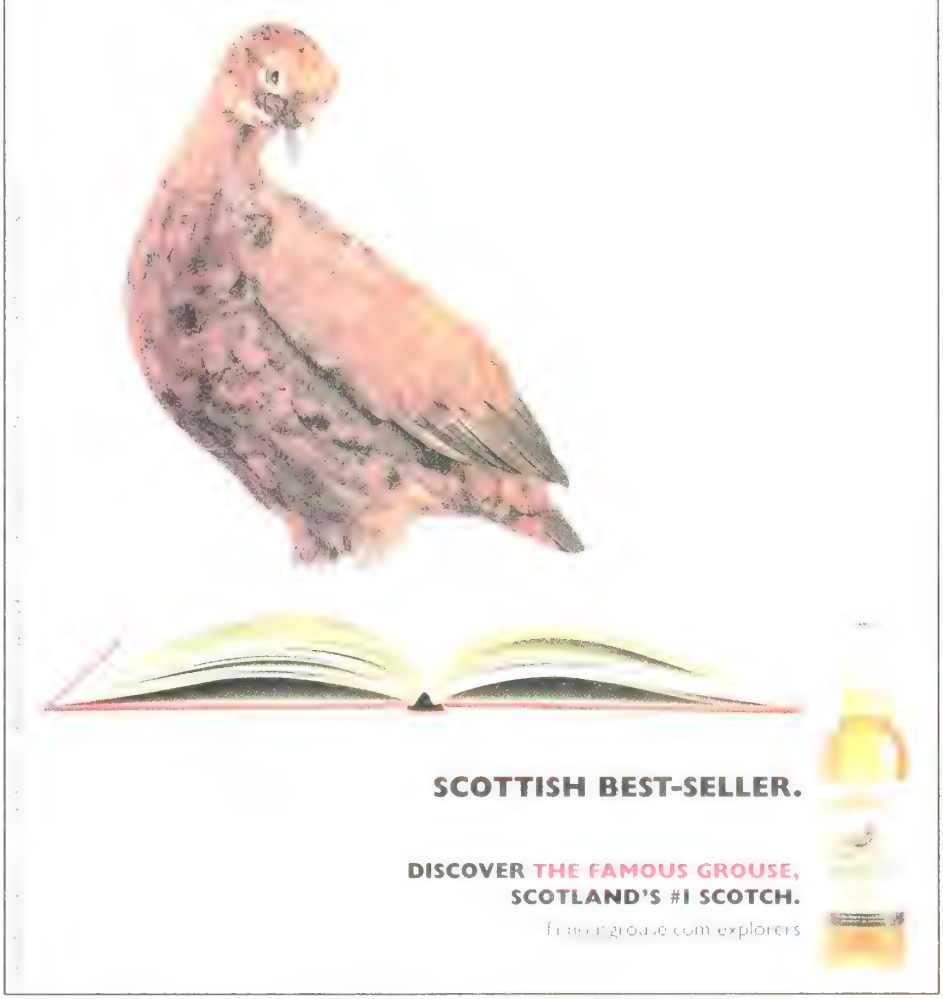
The flip side of the one-man band are those Music Is My Baggers who are not musicians at all. These are the kids who twirl flags or rifles in the marching band, the ones who blast music in their rooms and play not air guitar but air keyboards, their hands fluttering out in front of them, the hand position not nearly as important as the attendant head motions. This is the essence of Bagdom, which is to take greater pleasure in the reverb than the melody, to love the lunch break more than the rehearsal, the rehearsal more than the performance, the clarinet case more than the clarinet. It is to think nothing of sending away for the deluxe packet of limited-edition memorabilia that is being sold for the low, low price of one's entire personality. It is to let the trinkets do the talking.

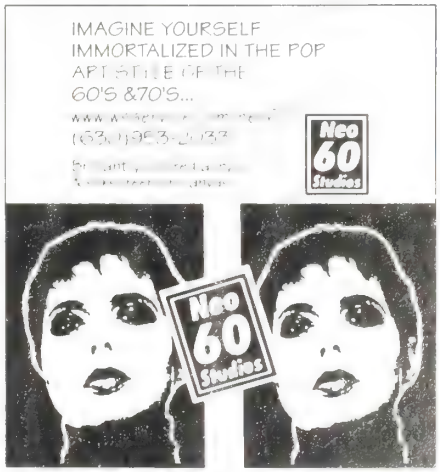
I was twenty-one when I stopped playing the oboe. I wish I could come up with a big, dramatic reason why. I wish I could say that I sustained some kind of injury that prevented me from playing (it's hard to imagine what kind of injury could sideline an oboist—lip strain? carpal tunnel syndrome?), or that I was forced to sell my oboe in order to help a family member in crisis, or, better yet, that I suffered a violent attack in which my oboe was used as a weapon against me before being stolen and melted down for artillery. But the truth has more to do with what in college I considered to be an exceptionally long walk from my dormitory to the music building. Without the prodding of my parents or the structure of a state-run music education program, my oboe career had to run on self-motivation alone, and when my senior year start-

I neither registered for private lessons nor signed up for the orchestra, dodging countless calls from the director imploring me to reassume my chair.

Since then I haven't set foot in a rehearsal room, put together a folding music stand, fussed with a reed, marked up music, practiced scales, tuned an orchestra, or performed any of the countless activities that previously had dominated my existence. There are moments every now and then when I'll hear an oboe-dominated section of the Bach Mass in B Minor or the berceuse section of Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite* and long to find a workable reed and pick the instrument up again. But then I imagine how terrible I'll sound after eight dormant years, and I just put the whole idea out of my mind before I start to feel sad about it. I can still smell the musty odor of my oboe case, the old-ladyish whiff of the velvet lining and the tubes of cork grease and the damp fabric of the key pads. Unlike the computer on which I now work, my oboe had the sense of being an ancient thing. Brittle and creaky, it was vulnerable when handled by strangers. It needed to be packed up right, dried out in just the right places, kept away from the heat and the cold and from anyone too stupid to distinguish it from a clarinet.

What I really miss about the oboe is having my hands on it. I could come at that instrument from any angle and know every indentation on every key, every spot that leaked air, every nick on every square inch of wood. I knew precisely how its weight was distributed between my right thumb and left wrist, and I knew, above all, that the weight would feel the same way every time, every day, for every year that I played. But I put my oboe down, and I never picked it back up. I could have been a pretty good oboist if I had practiced, if I had ignored the set design and just played the instrument. But I didn't and I wasn't. When I look back I hardly recognize myself, that person who could play a Mozart sonata by memory, whose fingers could move three times faster than I now type, a person who was given a gift, but who walked away from it because of piano-key scarves and fedora hats and all those secondary melodies that eventually became the only thing I could hear. ■





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ARCADIAN ADVENTURES

Walter Benjamin, the connoisseur of everyday life

By Mark Kingwell

[illegible]

[illegible] Walter Benjamin. Harvard University Press, 1999. 1,274 [illegible]

[illegible] *1925–1934*. Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin. Harvard University Press, 1999. 384 pages. $39.95.

In September 1940 the German Jewish writer Walter Benjamin [illegible] morphine in a small Pyrenees village [illegible]. He had been turned away from a Spanish [illegible] attempt to escape from the Nazis, who had already interned him near Paris. [illegible] time the arduous mountain crossing, [illegible] letters to Hannah Arendt and Theodor Adorno. [illegible] manuscript [illegible] Benjamin's life and work [illegible] small cities [illegible] ordinary life with no [illegible] Benjamin [illegible] on the [illegible] of that surrounds artwork under capitalism, the elusive something that gives them their historical authority, their aura of authenticity.

Benjamin has been for some time an intellectual cult figure, a philosophical saint; sixty years after his suicide, however, he seems poised to become a pop-culture icon. His reputation has been growing steadily since his work became [illegible] translation three decades ago, and his satanic mien, with its [illegible] mustache, glasses, and upswept shock of hair, [illegible] the media. Susan Sontag [illegible] him, savvy young professors cite him on fashion or architecture, graduate students [illegible] Yale [illegible] Benjamin [illegible] Now [illegible] name [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]



enjamin loved compact, himmering sentences, prac- ing the aphoristic form a matter of both inclination nd method. "All the best ve fellows are struck left anded," Benjamin writes in *One Way Street*. "Ambigu displaces authenticity in ll things." We understand most when we have not set out to achieve understanding.

Benjamin is most famous today for wo works, one a relatively short essay nd the other a mammoth project ne ompleted at his death and perhaps, in ts nature, incapable of completion. The article, published in 1936, is "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechani- al Reproduction," a widely influen- ial argument about the way multiple opies or broadcast or digital signals hspel the aura of [illegible] hat falls over art in high capitalism. Much anthologized, much disputed, he essay shows Benjamin the philoso- pher working near the top of his game. t lacks the warmth of his earlier work ut it is that rare thing, a wholly ac- essible original argument, a novel the- ory advanced with ready examples and alutary absence of jargon.

of capitalism through the arcades, the [illegible] were the master trope in a close ar-

[illegible] Benjamin's fascinated gaze

[illegible] emancipation is possible: use-value and exchange-value make way for con- [illegible]

M

work out the logic of these transfor-

aphorisms, and miniature essays. Ben-

and early film pioneers, especially the Surrealists, and claimed to be seeking

André Breton's *Nadja* and, even more,

illuminating light. But the voices of

clear for montage really to describe

sheaves of material, or "convolutes," that Benjamin arranged in a peculiar

Benjamin saw in the jumble

dream was actually a form of

street. "Streets are the dwelling places

pensive handmade paper. "The collective is an eternally waketul, eternally

tween the building fronts . . . lives, ex-

of their own four walls." Years

that "[m]ore than anywhere else,

ils itselt in the arcade as the

deep, slow movie between the tasks of life; or, sometimes, make strolling that task. Thus the apercu-quality of Benjamin's street-scenes: the reading

title: "For the *flaneur*, a transformation takes place with respect to the street in which he finds himself through an upheaval time. He strolls down the street; for him, every street is precipitous. . . . An intoxication comes over the man who walks long and aimlessly through the streets. With each step, the walk takes on greater momentum; ever weaker grow the temptations of bistros, of shops, of smiling women, ever more irresistible the magnetism of the next street corner, of the distant object in the fog, of the back of a woman walking before him."

Yet within this transforming excitement there is, too, a kind of languor, a pose of habitual and superior ennui that is worn proudly and ostentatiously, like an expensive cloak. "Boredom is a warm gray fabric lined on the inside with the most lustrous and colorful of silks," says Benjamin at one point in the convolute on boredom, the most consistently successful section of the *Project*. "In this fabric we wrap ourselves when we dream. We are at home then in the arabesques of its lining." The stroll and this cultivated listlessness are thus intimately related, pace here the outward sign of the flaneur's interior grace. "Idleness is the rhythmics of this slumber," Benjamin includes. "In 1852, a stage for omnibuses were the Paris streets. One can well imagine the elegant set mimicking the pace of this creature more easily in the arcades than on the boulevards. Boredom is always the external surface of unconscious events. For this reason, it has appeared to the great dandies as a mark of distinction." Fittingly, then, the major literary suc-

the elliptical, jagged arguments; polished sentences pitch up from the

Benjamin had written: "Quo-

believe the stroller's convenient

The best comparisons are not

ther book that used the same k

of ground, such as Roland Barth

Mythologies or Marshall McLuh

Mechanical Bride, but the collection

short meditations on the detritus

everyday consumer life—but rather

works of visual art—Peter Beard's ov

whelming pastiches of images and te

saw, everywhere scribbled with n

and comments and revisions; or, p

haps better, Joseph Cornell's medi

tive, surreal collisions of disparate

jects within the conventional, cl

banal, medium of the box. Like the

The Arcades Project spills out of its c

tainer to induce a weirdly vertigino

response in the viewer. It is redol

of wonders that ever threatens to b

the confines of two covers, to beco

instead a three-ring circus of the mi

An early version of the project, "

cades," shows that Benjamin was th

ing of the work as a continuation

One-Way Street and the writing

the unique signature of his early pr

> In the crowded, lifeless set that [
> vails, is it the semi-deserted stret
> the Rue Saint-Denis, umbrellas
> canes are displayed in serried rank
> phalanx of colorful crooks. Many ar
> instances of hygiene, where clubfo
> are wearing orthopedic belts and b
> Jaegers stand and the white bellie
> metacarpus. In the warehouses the b
> dressers, one sees the last women w
> ering hoop, their spout richly studd
> masses, petticoat cuffiaces. How br
> appears the stonework of the walls b
> them and above, crumbling pap
> torche." "Souvenirs" and bibelots
> on dark cedar; the odalisque lie
> seat next to the inkwell; priestesse
> knitted jackets; tasseled shirtwaists
> tresses of hair; scarves. . . . Over sto
> and lorettes' vestibules hall-coat stand
> silk. Naked puppet bodies with
> heads wait for hairpieces and attr
> Commissionaires' uniforms, green or
> gold cotton epaulettes; trapezes hu
> clothes; contests; umbrella handl
> and fungi in the festive parts that
> photographer's darkroom is indeed

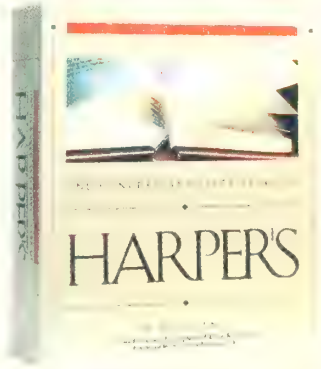
This kaleidoscopic jumble of Magritte images—severed cigarette lighters, swimming suits, metamorphosing seashells, musical instruments—is the pen flourish in what would prove an i possible task. "These items on disp are a rebus," Benjamin told Ador and a group of colleagues in Frankfu

a id [how] one ought to read he re the
ri dseed kept in the fixative pan from
larkroom, the flower seeds beside
e binoculars, the broken screws atop
re musical score, and the revolver
love the goldfish bowl—is right on
e tip of one's tongue."

What was the solution to the rebus'
t response to criticisms from Adorno
nd others, Benjamin proposed the no-
ion of the "dialectical" image as the
y to his method. He would read the
gures of the *Arcades* as part of a larg
social process. But he could not quite
rt with the notion of the dream. "The
ew, dialectical method of doing his-
ory teaches us to pass in spirit—with
he rapidity and intensity of dreams—
hrough what has been, in order to ex
erience the present as a waking world,
world to which every dream at last
efers." And then, elsewhere, "It is at
is moment that the historian takes up
. . . the task of dream interpretation."
What Benjamin did not reckon with,
erhaps, is the fecundity of dreams.
here is so much to them that we can-
ot reach an adept interpretation, even
given world enough and time. The
dream of the *Arcades* stood before him
ike the rich history of Paris, the ac
cnowledged world capital of the nine-
eenth century. Key elements stay rel-
atively fixed: the importance of
ironwork and glass, technical innova-
ions that made the arcades possible, as
much as they did the Crystal Palace or
the Eiffel Tower; the role of gaslight,
plush fashions, the slow pace of *flanc-*
e in the crowded streets; the boule-
vard scheme of Baron Haussmann,
which erased whole sections of Paris
in the new grand prospects—and, in-
cidentally, made barricades that much
more difficult to realize in street fight-
ing. ("With the Haussmannization of
Paris, the phantasmagoria was rendered
in stone," Benjamin says.) But he then
begins to add new elements as well:
large chunks about the political vi-
sionaries Saint-Simon and Fourier, long
excursuses into the 1848 uprising and
the bloody Paris Commune of 1871,
close reading of the dozens of partisan
newspapers and feuilletonist serial pub-
lications of the century's highly charged
second half. The convolutes multiply;
the stacks of apposite quotations rise;
the *Project* expands, sprawls, splits, and
recombines. It grows into a massive

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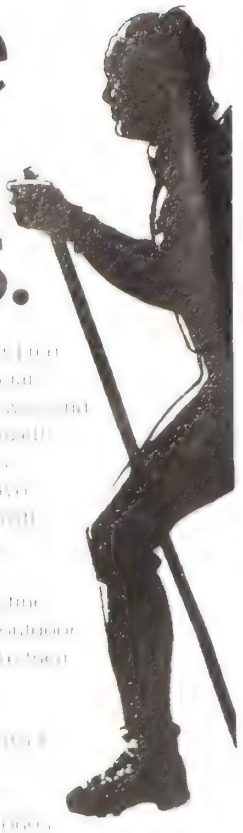
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shoppe mall of the mind, an uneasy an adventure.

Today in Paris the tourist arcades of Benjamin's vision are long gone, built over in waves of modernization. They have been replaced by rows of cheap souvenir shops along the Rue de Rivoli, and by the ghastly open-air shopping mall near Chatelet-les Halles, filled, as everywhere else, with the inescapable signs of McDonald's, Benetton, Pizza Hut, and a faked-up English pub, the Floozy and Firkin, all obscuring the nearby view of beautiful St. Eustache church. In the ranks of shops beside the Tuileries Gardens, near Rue St. Roch or Rue 29 Juliet, you can find all the miniature gargoyles, Swatch watches, Eiffel Tower charms, fake Hermes scarves, postcard sets, plastic swords, china kitsch (figures of love, loss, kittens), bright pennants, T-shirts, wind-up toys, crystal bowls, and dancing pipe-cleaner pets that you desire. Nearby, a massive scaffolding over the Centre Georges Pompidou shows the way that the collective imagination now comes branded and trademarked, and that public spaces, which should be dream houses of shared life, are infiltrated by tired corporate slogans. The museum is covered with an ad for Swatch, proudly praising "Notre Musée" and its new millennial incarnation. And not far from there, a beautiful mural of Pablo Picasso, as big as a couple of football fields, eventually reveals, as one walks out of the Louvre's Cour Napoleon toward the Place de la Concorde, Apple Computer's poor grasp of both propriety and grammar. Like everyone else, Pablo says, "Think Different."

In Boston's Newbury Street, meanwhile, or in the urban mode stores of New York's SoHo and Tribeca, even along the Burlington Arcade and Piccadilly Circus in London or in Berlin's new Arkaden amid the blandly refurbished modernism of the Potsdamer Platz, the stories—and the prices—are everywhere the same. There is a Tie Rack on every corner, a Body Shop on the next every prospect. The leisurely *flâneur*, who once lovingly collected his startling urban vistas and encounters with beautiful strangers, has been replaced by the mall rat and the tourist, hallumping up and down the conventional routes to see the same logoed merchandise on offer at every other destination. Where once the arcades bred culture and revolution in nearly equal measure, we now observe the happy conformity of global consumerism, a world filled with the new International Class: mobile, youthful, affluent, and comfortable, wearing their cargo pants, sneakers, and one-strap backpacks, or their basic-black four-button suits and chunky Kenneth Coles, everywhere from Harajuku to the Leidesplein to Ipanema. Metal and glass are still the materials of choice in the architecturally ambitious malls of the world, from Toronto's long-vaulted Eaton Centre to the Crystal Palace echoes of the Trafford Centre in Manchester; but inside there is no dreaming, just another staggering *Dawn of the Dead* sequel.

It would be tempting to tell this story as one of glories lost, an invitation to nostalgia. Tempting, too, to see *The Arcades Project* as an unwitting celebration of what it sought to analyze. That story is tempting, but it is misleading. For one thing, the old forms are still present if one knows where to look. Follow Piccadilly Circus into the quiet haven of London's Jermyn Street, where handmade shirts and ties, bright braces, and gaudy cufflinks crowd the Victorian shop windows like rows of glossy confections, and you may yet find the dandies of yesteryear, now promenading in two-vent suits and Turnbull & Asser shirts rather than morning coats and spats. Parisians still stroll better than most people on earth, and on Sundays you may yet observe the fashionable couples with their children pushing boats in the Luxembourg Gardens while Catherine Deneuve walks by, diva-style, with a cigarette in one hand and a little one in the other. Near the Place des Vosges in the Fourth Arrondissement you can, in gorgeous little shops, buy exactly the sort of expensive, handmade paper Benjamin proudly used for the early version of his *Arcades* essay. The *place* itself, a perfect four-square covered passageway bordering the Square Louis XIII park, is a testament to art, history, and high fashion, with

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...demie de l'Architecture, the ...offices of Issey Miyake and Kenzo ...t, and the former house of both ...or Hugo and Theophile Gautier ...its southern corner. A courtyard ...he north side opens on to what ...be the most beautiful hotel in Eu...e, the ivy-covered, four-star Pavil...de la Reine. You may even stumble ...an intact arcade in the cold style ...the Galerie Vero Dodat, which ...off the corner of Rue de Bourbon ...First Arrondissement, not far from ...Louvre. This covered walkway, nar... and dimly lit, is the concrete rem...t of the many passageways that ol...ed Benjamin, the trace of a trope. ...nstructed in 1822, it is one of the ... remaining examples of the site of ...jamin's excavations, and it houses ...umble of shops and objects that ...uld have pleased him. Broken dolls ...d dollhouses, randomly stacked oil ...ntings, leather-bound first editions ...Oscar Wilde in Japanese and Ger...n, one of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* ...mplete with Surrealist "realizations" ...selected scenes, rendered in chrom...al on heavy paper. Which, coinci...ntally, is exactly the medium used ...the hyper-cool art students, all with ...ndard-issue nose rings, dreadlocks, ...d torn jeans, who still sketch the ...the modern glass and ironwork ...nopy of the Galerie du Nord with the ...me connoisseur's eye that Benjamin ...ought to those quintessential nine...enth-century materials.

More important, however, is the in...ght that the true connoisseurship of ...veryday life is always as much interested in junk as in luxury items, is fixed on advertising jingles as on poetry. ...very miniature Eiffel Tower has a sto...to tell. We make a mistake if we are ...duced by the eternally false promise ...of a better past, a golden age of pub... life—something that Benjamin saw ...ite clearly both within the arcades ...nd in his own compulsive reaction ...to them. Benjamin's lesson about the ...eam of history is that we are always ...eguiled by its strange surfaces and ...ntastic images. In modernity we are ...rever in the grip of the new, and this ...n turn generates a blinding nostalgia ...bout the past. At virtually the same ...nstant, the duality generates an over...helming and enervating boredom ...hat we have not yet, despite all our ...best efforts, learned to combat.

"We are bored," writes Portmann, "when we have the sensation that we cannot act. That we [illegible] that we know, or nearly so, the consequences of our superficial engagement." Boredom is the thing "that deadens deeds." But what if, as Benjamin and Adorno, not the Frankfurt School [illegible] empty stimulation by moving through this double effect [illegible] in the Empire of the Sign, Adorno shared with Benjamin a belief that Benjamin banked on *The Arcades Project* in the first place. Yet he was still caught, as we so often are today, in the sticky grip of the commodity. Even the sharpest of cultural critics, it once he gives in to the temptation of the individual object magic, is bound to feel the pull of fetishism's deep gravity well. Benjamin wanted to analyze the "luster with which the commodity produces society surrounds itself," to read these mundane "wish symbols" in the "residue of the dream world." But it has to be careful, that the mind becomes not the [illegible]. In assessing the pleasures that capitalism makes possible, he may simply reproduce those desires rather than get the better of them: a form of cultural-critical countertransference.

That is what Adorno meant, in letters critical of *The Arcades Project*, by the "naïveté" we see still clinging, here and there, to Benjamin's lovingly constructed folly. The real problem, as neither of them fully knew at the time but which confronts us today, is that more sophisticated theory will not serve here. Or rather, the kind of theory Adorno could himself will not solve the problem. It succeeds only in separating itself from everyday life. This culture has to [illegible] with the poetry Borg life—politics, consumerism, capitalism, which is so good at folding resistance back into itself [illegible] waves of cool clothes and subversive [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] cultural theory, where [illegible] virtually [illegible] Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer would articulate these limits with great precision in the work they [illegible] after the war, in [illegible] [illegible] retaining [illegible] [illegible] culture [illegible] [illegible] between [illegible] [illegible].

"Whenever a friend succeeds, a little something in me dies," Gore Vidal once observed.

[illegible]
—Hungarian Chess Player



[illegible]

[illegible]
—O. [illegible]

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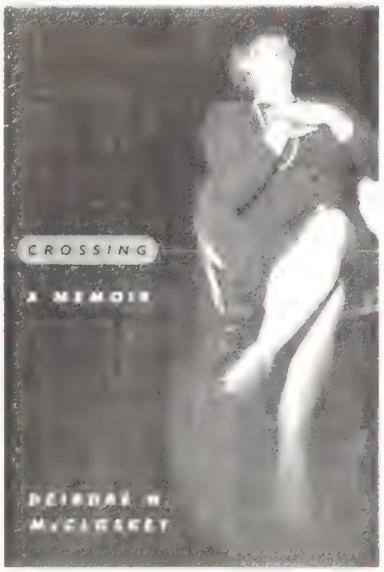
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CROSSING

A MEMOIR

DEIRDRE N. McCLOSKEY



When I received *Crossing* I wondered why the editors had not designated it for review by someone gay or someone involved in the transgendered community. Reading it I realized that I—a lifelong heterosexual woman—need this book. All of us need to consider the way our culture shapes gender expectations. This is a story that's worth knowing. She has given us a highly readable dramatic account of her crossing.

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tute. But they could not change those limits, and they could not save their version of critical theory from a politically empty elitism about culture.

In Europe, in the Thirties, things were more stark. "The experience of our generation," Benjamin wrote in a late addition to the *Arcades*, is "that capitalism will not die a natural death." That sentiment may have a quaintness to our ears, but Benjamin's life was lived in a different world, and he had a prescient vision we would do well to recapture in this age of easy cynicism—not as nostalgia but as a survival strategy. Adorno's criticisms were misplaced not because, as some have argued, critical theory is impossible under capitalism but because he did not see that Benjamin was struggling with the only possible way to theorize capitalism now—namely, by means of a constant immersion in its murky waters. We must not abandon the basic task of materialist critique—it still matters fundamentally who owns and who profits—but we must approach those criticisms from our own experience of daily life, not from some theoretical pinnacle. This is a dangerous and constant task, a task that necessarily goes unfinished. It is also a task full of optimism. Of these two great thinkers, Benjamin is the one who dies unnaturally, who seems to be mired in despair. But it is in fact Benjamin who possessed the greater stores of hope—who, though so often charged with an excess of whimsy or charm rather than of materialist precision, exhibited the more serious commitment to political change.

Benjamin wanted *The Arcades Project* to be the history of an era, but he failed to complete that history. He failed, in another sense, to complete his life. These failures mean, paradoxically, that the success of his dream is our dream still. There is a collective *Arcades Project*, like the original forever incomplete, a project of continual resistance in a world where resistance is so often thought futile. Benjamin's book is not the history of an era but, instead, the history of a moment—the nineteenth of Benjamin's dream, of the bad dreams from which we struggle to awake, and of the dreams of a better world that maintain a wispy, beckoning presence even in the most banal fashion trend or pop song. We must always be ready to go astray. "Not to find one's way about in a city is of little interest. But to lose one's way in a city, as one loses one's way in a forest, requires practice," Benjamin says in *Berlin Childhood*. "I learned this art late in life: it fulfilled the dreams whose first traces were the labyrinths on the blotters of my exercise books." What are we looking for when we enter the staggering world of the shopping mall? What do we hope to find in the tribal tourist haunt? What does our intercontinental boredom tell us? We must read our cultural experience as Benjamin did his, savoring the apparently prosaic details while looking for the traces of arcadian desire that point beyond the way things are.

March Index Sources

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ONAN THE MAGNIFICENT

The triumph of the testicle in contemporary art

By Roger D. Hodge



With the appearance of his new film, *Cremaster 2*, Matthew Barney's reputation as an important American artist is secure. Barney is the author of a cycle of art films so audacious and brilliant, so potent in their symbolism and private mythology, that astonished critics, fumbling awkwardly for an apt comparison, routinely evoke some dim memory of Richard Wagner's Ring cycle. Michael Kimmelman, chief art critic for the *New York Times*, has simply proclaimed him "the most crucial artist of his generation." Barney has also garnered uncommon support from powerful arts institutions. He was the first recipient, in 1996, of the Guggenheim Museum's prestigious Hugo Boss Prize, and next year the Guggenheim will honor the thirty-three-year-old

Roger D. Hodge is [illegible] Harper's Magazine. His [illegible] has appeared in [illegible].

artist with [illegible] featuring the [illegible] future [illegible].

Such accolades are well deserved. And yet they fall [illegible] perhaps never quite [illegible] artist of [illegible] to "death, redemption, [illegible] the world." [illegible] enough [illegible]

[illegible] representation [illegible] of the achievement [illegible] treatment, when the very concepts of the good, the true, and the beautiful have been rejected by most "boundary-pushing" [illegible] becomes appreciative to [illegible] better to note that Barney represents a crystallization of the technological, aesthetic, and [illegible] elements of the avant-garde artist: the [illegible] ecology, and that he shares with [illegible] contemporaries [illegible] intellectual [illegible] sexual [illegible], and gross primary sexual morphology. [illegible] in the [illegible] pubic [illegible] were the [illegible] the genital, and Barney falls squarely within this stream of recent art.

Appropriately, fame and fortune have followed, but Barney's [illegible] has [illegible] enthusiastic treatment. Overall, however, demands [illegible] more than [illegible]. What ever the artist's most ardent admirers have failed to recognize is that Matthew Barney is the Michelangelo of genital art, the supreme master of the genre, whose every stroke and theme [illegible] full celebration [illegible].

future museums and not-yet-imagined

B

first videos and installations were al-

yoke

young Yale graduate sliding up and

to clamber about naked on the walls

the critical establishment seemed

ing exercises wearing a black

solar plexus by an actor. The sym-

bolism of these early works is an elo-

critical, almost painfully acute, self-

include 1991's *Transexualis*, *MILE*

ANAL SADISTIC WARRIOR, and

BOLU'S, many of which contain a

repeating structural element called

which appeared a few years later in

the 1993 Whitney Biennial, fea-

tured Barney costumed as a goat-boy

By this point in his career, Barney

Annie Sprinkle.[2] His obsession wi

7 were merely a prelude to th

ter cycle.

not only regulates the temperature o

also responsible for the fetal descen

plays a primordial role in the genesis

sexuality. This important and ob

talisman of difference and sexual di

the genital persuasion, Barney makes

fetish of difference (though, unlik

What distinguishes Barney's Onanism

about the self, Barney's self, which h

understands solely as an epiphenom

sexual identity.

B

beyond adolescent Dadaist highjinks.

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like a beehive, which works to supp[illegible]

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EIGHTY YEARS AND AFTER

By William Dean Howells



All my life I have been afraid of death. I think one like is true of every one, and I think it is also true that now, when old and nearer death, in the order of life, than ever before, I am less afraid of dying than when I was young and naturally far from it. I believe this again is true of all men, but it may not be at all true of others. Perhaps in age, as in sickness, when the vital forces are lowered we lose something of that universal and perpetual dread, until, as observation, if not experience, teaches, we survive it altogether and make the good end common to the dying.

Apparently the fear of death does not always mount with the loss of faith in a life hereafter. Sometimes the contrary. I was barely five years old when I began to

but as I feel I cannot investigate such questions, with less chance than I had, through my childish ignorance, of ever knowing the truth, I am content to leave them to the greater intelligences that will succeed me. I had had enough of that, being a sinner, as I believed I was, and I should suffer in many forms after death; yet, now that the fear of hell was effectively gone, I was not sure that I was little better off. I remember that I used to pray that I might not die before morning, and that I might not go to hell,

William Dean Howells (1837–1920) was [illegible] *Harper's Monthly* [illegible] *Novel Accounts* [illegible] *Howells* [illegible] *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1889); *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885); and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1889). *Howells* [illegible] *1871 to 1891* [illegible] *Harper's* [illegible] and *Fifty Years at Harper's Magazine*.

The greatest and most dramatic

is altogether the most beautiful thing

ridiculous, though often ridiculous enough to the witness. Its perversion is the ughest thing in life and the shamefulest, but for a day, for an

one's other years; yet it does not escape the imperfection which mars

the home and the children, proceed

death, and the rending of the dearest

from love, too; the grave as well as the home awaits it.

There are faults which age redeems us from, and there are virtues which turn to vices with the lapse of years. The worst of these is thrift, which in early and middle life it is wisdom and duty to practice for a provision against destitution. As time goes on this virtue is apt to turn into the ugliest, crudest, shabbiest of the vices. Then the victim of it finds himself hoarding past all probable need of saving for himself or those next him, to the depri-

was symbolized by gold or silver, the miser had a sensual joy in the touch

and in gloating upon their increase sensible to the hand and eye. Then the miser had his place among the great figures of misdoing; he was of a

transmuted to the balance in his favor at his banker's, or the bonds

hoarding: His bed examined

had ranked him with the picturesq

or histrionic wrong-doers, and whic

him from, unless he gave his remna

of strength to saving himself from

this but few have the meanness

he who died rich died disgraced, ar

died the other day in the compar

tive penury of fifty millions.

Few old men have the strength

save themselves from their fault

perhaps because they have nothing

the resilience of youth in any sort.

would be interesting to know whe

this ceases in mind or body, b

without calling other dotards to wi

ness, I will record that, physically,

had ceased in me half-way throug

my seventies, as I once found when

jumped from a carriage at the sugge

tion of the young driver who said I

did not like the way the horse

acting. I myself saw nothing wrop

in the horse's behavior, but I re

soned that a driver so young mu

knew better, and I struck the groun

with the resilience of an india-rubb

of the same weight.

Yet any time within the seventi

I should say that one still felt you

in body if not in mind, after th

one feels young oftenest in spirit.

beautiful morning will go far to fin

the joy of youth in the octogenar

an, as a gloomy sunset will mid-l

pathos of it. I imagine, in fact, th

youth lurks about in holes and co

ners of us as long as we live, but w

must not make too free with it. W

may go for a good long walk in th

forenoon, and feel the fresher; bu

we must not be tempted to anothe

walk in the afternoon, lest the nex

morning find us fully as old as w

are. Exercise is not for age unless

is the carriage exercise which use

so much prescribed by the physicians

the rich; certainly not motor exer

which is almost as bad as walk

ing exercise. A stick helps out, but

will not do so much as it promise

on an up-hill way. In the summer

for instance, I live in a valley wit

hills so full to the

myself a wrong-doer in my

Him, make Him sick at heart. I do

with whatever humility the utmost

of this diminishing dread,

injuring what

and the



rverse the intervening meadows
vl refreshment, or at least without
xhaustion, but in front there lies
gy it up since I was seventy a hill
vr h was not there before and is
prising as the effect of some re-
o volcanic upheaval. When I be-
to climb this strange acclivity I
my stick a very lively leg, but as
ount it falters and goes lame, and
st ore I reach the top I think I
uld almost be better without it.
ore a certain time in my liter
epties I was a quite indefatigable
estrian, but one night, coming
of a theater in Boston, I boldly
ssed the Common toward my ho-
on Beacon Hill till it began to
under me. There I began to sink
ler it, and before I reached the
I despaired in a deadly fatigue
ich was probably in part the ef
t of sitting unmoved through sev
l hours in the theater. I should
e to warn all octogenarians to be
re of resting too much, there is
h a thing as that and it is a very
ous thing.

After sixty one must not take too
my chances with one's self, but I
ould say that the golden age of man
between fifty and sixty, when one
w sately take them. One has peace
en from the different passions; if
he has been tolerably industrious
he is tolerably prosperous, one has
irly learned one's trade or has mas-
red one's art; age seems as far off as
outh, one is not so much afraid of
eath as earlier, one likes joking as
uch as ever and loves beauty and
uth as much, family cares are well
ut of the way; if one has married
mely one no longer nightly walks
he floor with even the youngest
uld, the marriage ring is then a cir-
e halt rounded in eternity. It is a
lessed time, it is indeed the golden
ge, and no age after it is more than
lvern. The best age after it may be
nat between eighty and ninety, but
ne cannot make so sure of ninety as
seventy in the procession of the
ears, and that is where the gold turns
lver. But silver is one of the precious
netals, too, and it need not have any
lloy of the baser ones. I do not say
ow it will be in the years between

SOLUTION, TO THE
FEBRUARY PUZZLE

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[illegible] confronted with that question. Still, [illegible] eighty and ninety, if [illegible] wanted; but between eighty and ninety, if [illegible] wanted is [illegible] It is a painful question, but one must not shirk it, and in my [illegible] one must not [illegible] one's utmost [illegible] when one's utmost will cost more effort than before. This is undeniably [illegible] but we cannot change the conditioning if we wish to live. [. . .]

The young mostly think the old are subjectively dull because they seem objectively dull, but they may often seem so because youth, not life, is uninteresting. I have known only one octogenarian who was not interested in any phase of life, who no longer cared to learn or tell of new things, who turned from books as jadedly as from men. This might have been because he had known the best of both to satiety. It more often is the routine habit of the mind [illegible] that, by eighty, has left most of the field [illegible] In my own case, though, I have not been [illegible] I have leveraged so much of it that every now and then when I propose myself some [illegible] I cannot find the heart to [illegible] which I have read only two or three times before, or [illegible] the latest poetry and fiction, I have ignored many of the things which [illegible] I have been rather fond of reading things many [illegible] Henry V's heartless snub of Falstaff [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] lived more or [illegible] together, [illegible] were [illegible] recently which [illegible] rather [illegible] function [illegible] of the old, though [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] apt to think [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

There is a common [illegible] upon [illegible] tion of old people — seventy, [illegible] and even [illegible] — which I [illegible] should here like to combat, for I [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

A

THE FABULOUS WARDROBE OF MRS. PAT CAMPBELL

By Justin Haythe

The sink is filled with shards of glass, a black boot print mars the kitchen table. In the bedroom, the closet doors are open, one or two dresses, things she forgot she owned, are sprawled across the floor as if there had been a struggle.

"Whoever did this knew about your dresses," says the Inspector. "Do you wear them out often? Show them off?"

"No," says Pat. "Occasional Friday night, I suppose. Haven't had much call recently." She watches the Inspector carefully turn the letters in his notebook. He has a large hollow seeming chest, as if the internal organs in his uniform were propped up on tent poles. He is full of openings. She has already seen the unlikely things in the back of his mouth, his gaping gray ears, his eyes twitch in the shadow of his heavy brow like internal organs.

"And your husband . . . Any boasting at the pub?"

Garret sits at the table smoking another cigarette. Inspector Briggs thought to direct his question to the man at the table when it was already halfway asked.



Pat screws up her face. Garret is intelligent, absent-minded, but makes [illegible] —

Starr

"

"I haven't met my match what a nice wardrobe you've assembled." The Inspector inclines his head and raises his eyebrow.

"Maybe not quite. I don't know." Garret says. He is ready to be amused. He cannot meet the Inspector's eye.

"I'll want those names, if you don't mind."

The Inspector turns back to Pat. Her skin is pale. There are pieces at the sides of her eyes. They open in close-packed hammered black and teeth and then fall flat, like tropical fish. She has thin dark lips and keeps crevices at the base of her neck, bony furrows. Time flicks from her. In the past she has always looked like that, but recently she has ended up with her self-styled face. It is no good to her now.

"You valued the dresses at sixty thousand pounds," says the Inspector, reading from his pad.

"That's right," she says. She walks over to remove the lighter bottle from the flame and takes three times from the Irish drummer.

"Like me but more so."

"So that we've established." She puts the lighter back in the drawer and closes the cupboard doors. The light from the window is caught upon her chest

and passes straight through her hair.

"Six thousand pounds," repeats the Inspector. He watches her as she drops the tea bags into the rubbish beneath the sink. He glances around the room at the bucket of rags beside the door, the children's shoes lined up on a newspaper, warming in front of the stove.

"My husband used to be a fashion photographer," says Pat, handing the Inspector a cup of tea. "There's sugar there on the table . . . He used to take the odd thing for me . . . Nothing illegal, mind you."

"And they took nothing else," the Inspector repeats. He frowns. "You're not insured for the dresses, are you?"

"No, no." Pat smiles. She thinks of telling the Inspector she once had the figure for the dresses, like a model, but she has kept her figure. Unlike with other women she knows, her body mysteriously returned to its former self after growing enormous with each child. She thinks she looks like a widow, not a mother. She decides she would seem vain if she were to talk about her figure as if she had lost it. She is still noticed by men her own age. Perhaps, when she is old and gray and drinks too much at lunch, she will tell people what a figure she had when she was young.

Pat lifts her head from the contemplation of her hips and frowns. She walks over and puts her hand on Garret's shoulder. The Inspector is watching Garret, his hair almost touching the table through his fingers. He is unshaven, he has given his cigarette up to the ashtray as he stirs his tea; he needs one hand to prop himself up. "My husband has not been well, you understand," she tells the Inspector. Garret looks up and smiles.

Two fat little girls drift into the room. Sarah and June. June, the younger, pulls a little plastic dog with ears that flap in time with revolving orange wheels. They sit on either of their father's knees. He perks up slightly for them, an arm around each, a hand on their swollen tummies. June puts the dog on the table in front of her. The Inspector thinks Garret is smoking dangerously close to them. A series of glittery white scars mark the ends of his fingers, a cigarette burn on the inside of his thumb. The Inspector has two grandchildren of his own. He walks over to the kitchen sink.

"Came in through here, then?"

Pat is leaning against the counter nearby. "That's right. Must have stood up on the rubbish bins."

"You should work for the police force, Mrs. Campbell." He tries an old standby, and she smiles. She joins him at the sink and points toward the garages at the back of the playground behind the block of flats.

"You can get in over there," she says. "Over the garages." He leans forward and puts his face near the empty window frame. His thick neck stretches from his shirt collar; bronze hairs come through cracks in his skin.

"Just the four of you, then?"

"And Tobey," says Garret.

The Inspector turns to look at the rear of Garret's head, hunched over, between the girls.

"The kitty," they say in unison.

"Oh, I see. The cat," says the Inspector. The girls giggle.

"Can I try your hat?" asks the older girl without turning around. She has been eyeing it on the chair across the room.

"Sarah," cautions Pat with a turn of her head. A sheet of black hair comes down beside her, emphasizing the profile of her face.

"No, no, it's all right," the Inspector says. He retrieves his helmet and hands it to the girl. She looks inside. She pinches her nose at the smell, though she is old enough to know not to let on what she's doing. "Put it on," urges the Inspector. She lifts it above her and grins with pleasure at being momentarily the center of attention. The younger girl looks up at her sister, mouth open. She seems to have stopped breathing.

Half of Sarah's face disappears inside. "There you are," says the Inspector.

"Oh, look at that," says Pat. She smiles appreciatively. The Inspector winks and for an instant involuntarily puffs out his lips.

"You and the girls were out?"

"Shopping," Pat says.

"And you?" he turns to Garret.

"I was at the job center."

"Any luck?"

Garret makes a sound just short of a laugh and shakes his head.

"It's not easy, these days," says the Inspector.

"No," says Pat.

"Can I have a look at the bedroom?"

"Course you can," says Pat.

They are alone in the bedroom. He smells slightly stale, like a train seat. His body is aging. Uniforms always make people look this way, propped up, heavy in the thighs and the buttocks. She walks across the room and closes the blankets across the unmade bed.

"They didn't touch the bed, did they?"

"No, no." She finishes covering the mattress and looks down at it as if she has decided, with regret, that there is nothing more she can do to it. "I don't think so. My husband had a bit of a lie-in this morning."

She keeps her face turned away from him. It was a stupid question, he decides. He has embarrassed her.

She looks outside. The street falls away from the bedroom window. They get the headlights from every car that comes down the cul-de-sac and makes a U-turn in front of the flats. The cars pause, their lights shining in as the driver finishes saying whatever it is to the person sitting next to him before driving off. They forget people live on the ground floor. The previous tenant petitioned for the planting of trees, but it will be years before they are big enough to do anything about the lights. Pat and Garret have been married eleven years. They once sat in cars shining lights at a block of flats. They met at college, where Garret admired her large collage portraits made from crockery and broken glass. He used to borrow a car and they sat for thirty minutes, sometimes more, in front of her mother's, lighting up the walls in someone's bedroom.

The Inspector turns to the closet. A cold metallic nest of hangers rests on the floor, a few hang motionless on the bar. The dresses that are left have been pushed to the sides or li

...ne's on the floor. "They left your ...ex." He drops to his knees and ...es a piece of fabric with the end ...n's pen.

"No," she says. "None of the ex...ve ones."

"They'll probably sell them in the ...rket," he says. "A tenner each."

"They don't know what they've ...." She stands beside him, shifting ...h one foot to the other.

"They never do," says the Inspec... "These aren't clever people. ...bably just lads from the estate ...o heard something about your ...ses. One of 'em knows someone's ...ther who's got a stall in the mar... in London on the weekends. A ... drinks in the pub hatching ...ns. Hundred dresses, a tenner ...h . . . you get the idea."

"You're probably right," she says. ...e looks down at him. He wears ...ite socks—two small arrowheads ...white between his dark shoes and ...user cuffs. Everything he has said ...s said into the closet. She could ...ch him over, she thinks.

"Yes," he confirms solemnly. His ...n is on the inside of the dress. It ...oked purple on the floor, but he is ...gmenting to teal here it is actually ...ky green. This one doesn't look ...cap, he thinks to himself, but he is ...t an expert. He tends not to no...e what women wear, unless they ...em uncomfortable.

"Kids from 'round here." She ...ds. "You know, I used to live in an ...tate like this when I was a kid."

He drops the dress on the floor. "Did you?" The radio crackles on his ...el. He stands and lowers the vol...me. He looks at her, the bed just ...hind her. The dim light could be ...rly morning, if it weren't for the ...unds from the street. She stands ...th her legs apart, her hips cocked ...e is wearing black leggings and ...nk socks. She has produced a ciga...tte from somewhere. She piles her ...ir behind her head with both ...nds, her elbows pointing out—the ...y she might if she were lying in ...d beside someone. She is not flirt...g with him, he suddenly realizes. ...omen often do, but in the harm...ss way his daughters' school friends ...ed to. He is everyone's father. He ...big, with big hands, a big mouth.

It disappointed him, eventually. He had thought at first that Mr Campbell might have been giving him the attention he was reluctant to order the rest of her unsuitable husband. He has seen stranger things: he has been in the room with younger officers when the women, their husbands nearby, romped like men in uniforms. For some, he thinks, it is the sole reason for becoming the force. But this one, Mrs Campbell, B and E, at number nine in the estate on Rumbelt Road, is paying him very little attention. She is distracted by that man in the other room. The Inspector decides to think of other things. What else does he need to look at? He is known for being fastidious in his work, but lately he has grown bored. Boredom is the only way to know when something is finished. He wonders if she thought he would be surprised to hear that she had lived in an estate like this one. It hadn't occurred to him that she had ever lived anywhere else.

The dresses came with them from Mindi Vale four years ago: thirty suit bags hanging on a bar across the back of the car. The Peugeot is sold now. She often thinks of the rooms in the flat on Carlton Vale: sunlight in diamond shapes on the wooden floors, walls the color of salt crystal. There was a square out front—a private park for residents only, for which they had a key. She sat on a bench in the park and breast-fed both her children in the shade of a pink-flowered tree.

Garret worked for three years as the assistant to M. Buswell, one of the most celebrated photographers in London. The older man was uncommonly generous. He invited Eva and Garret to parties in large houses. He introduced Garret to people who could help him, and found him a booking agent who [illegible] his own.

One summer evening, [illegible] the number 82 bus to Victoria for a party on Eaton Square. Marble Arch was lit up, mechanical [illegible] in the shop windows. Lamps marked black paths through [illegible]. Garret got so excited [illegible]

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dresses he punched from the shoots for her. They held hands at the en

was full of stragglers: fashion people,

she had spotted someone she could neglect.

She stood against the wall. She

the wall into the center of the room. "You smoke too much." Pat looked down at her cigarette. "You're ner- ous like your brother."

She allowed herself to circle around the room until the hostess became distracted by a young man sitting alone beside the fireplace. She wandered through the open French doors onto the terrace. Angela, her red hair pulled into a single braid, stood among a group of young women. A makeup artist from Arizona, she had worked with Garret on several shoots; she met Pat when Garret was still assisting. She is the only friend Pat has kept from London. She went with Pat to the park when she took Sarah and June to feed the ducks. She blew up balloons for Sarah's fourth birthday.

The lights were on in some of the surrounding houses, as if the party went on down the street. A couple stood side by side on the sparkling grass. His white trousers reflected a mysterious light. Angela and Pat stood where they could look back at the party through the French doors. The hostess had her arms around a much older man.

"That fat cow," said Pat.

"Don't mind her," said Angela. "She'll be full blame on herself by ten."

Michael sat on men's laps on the comfortable chairs, deep sofas, colorful ottomans. They touched themselves on Garret's knee when he was leaning over, talking heatedly to the man at his right. Garret smoked viciously, and drinks didn't seem to affect him. "Look at all these tarts," Pat told Angela. She felt he could completely forget her. Sometimes, she worried, she secretly wished his

She wandered the party alone. Eight, nine, and three. She stood in line to use the toilet. A photographer everyone said would be knighted came up behind her and put his hand reached inside around her belly and arms, she thought. The photographer whispered in her ear, "You're the only real woman here tonight." It was not

against him. The hand that held

difference. She turned around;

ning. She looked down at his wh

trousers, his black gold buckled sh

mens, she thought. He had n

"You have the wrong person," said.

"I certainly do not," he answere

"Oh, but I think you have. Y just don't go around putting yo hand in people's clothing."

"I certainly do," he said.

Garret was craning forward, t end of his cigarette twitching b tween his fingers. He spoke rapi barely able to keep up with hims He was burning with energy, peo said.

"What's happening to your wif someone laughed.

They looked around and saw leaning against the wall with photographer. Garret raised his gl and finished his drink. "Pat is only thing worth saving," he sa Those around him laughed. He r from his seat and walked toward h He placed his hand on her ar "You've met Michael, then?" he sa He did not look at the photograph "Come sit by me now."

"Yes," she said. She smiled Michael, who had not stopped gri ning. "I think I'm getting bored wi you," she said.

"Of course you are," said Garret.

After one o'clock, they shared line of cocaine with Angela and o of her friends. The hostess follow them out onto the front steps a waved both hands above her hea her jewelry bouncing at her elbow They walked all the way hom through Hyde Park. They lay dow together on the grass, the hotels Park Lane glittering above them. I mimicked the people from the part The man who came back from th toilet with no shirt on, the older m with a red face, who looked, Pat sai like a member of Parliament and wh spent all night telling people the e citing news: it was official, the En lish consume more champagne tha

…friends. The evening was warm … watched police cars move … and through the park. They could … the team moving further beneath the … He rolled over onto his … illion people," he said. He … asked her, "For what?" he asked … and he would have everything … her, all those people. "I'm well," … he asked. He held his … breath to prevent …

The first bad poll came just after … net had bought the cars, silver … , driven especially from Paris for … color, and a video recorder for … ent. Two different movie … representatives were on the phone … minute to know why Garnet hadn't … reading. Half a dozen people want … speech to this at the cost of over … hundred pounds per hour. Pat … stood in the doorway of the bedroom … the phone, he explained that … husband was not feeling well … had contracted the mumps … never had and he reserved … d dismiss the days, wonder me … ons at night. He continued to … ver and no food until he returned to … him anything more to bind. He … ver got closer. He and Brett were … off in his head, one by one … ed he would be on his way to the … ort. There was a pain in his belly … was sure part of his stomach … uld come out at he allowed himself … ll to defecate. His leader called … ed to tell her it never happened … am he would not be able to see … anet any more would "You cannot … and up, Vesme." The boy, an model … d he would have sex with Garnet … am. "No matter," said the leader. It … ould leave him an insecure … on, but it could hit happiness. … Garnet got better … sadness and home … from the hell he'd made him. He made … ent and him beneath the sheet … the days out of became brilliant, … ght. On the weekend they … ed and walked along the sand … Chalk Farm where Sarah had … d. Brandt into her hair. In the … nate were the most from the that … ood picture of himself evolving … home, his hand … d paper in … ayer, and sent them to the model … th flowers.

He made up with an elaborate … …patty, and sent each other … ers … ne could hide … at the beginning. … He didn't … tell Garnet that he … ne in … stomach was … completely … ered. The tedium … the … the morning and … made … uncomfortable … something … "people like us" … The … got … some … to the … life to … People … the … young … in … out … car, and … every … thousand pound … the … "That" the young man who … Vesme … "People point him out … parties. "Doesn't … ?"

And then there was another … in the crew was … for him at the … airport. The cloud … over him … heard, like … in … life … had. The leader left … call from Garnet … wanted to … him … and … talk him … medication. He … to … other hand … people … with … illness … people were … of … illness … photographed … and … to … him … camera … the … He … and … them … Then … was … The … was … Garnet … to … him … photographs … and … to … him … anything … the … He … Garnet … He … Garnet … What would happen, she wondered, if she left him … ?

He … on the … of the … the … and … the … He … Garnet … and … the … He … the … and … Garnet … and … the … He … the … and … the … He … the … and … the … He … the

all same pretty dresses." He rubs a hand over Sarah's head.

They walk hand in hand together. The cars are packed with mud. The girls skip a little farther ahead, their knee socks flashing against the brown pavement. Dusk still comes early, but the nights have gotten warmer. He is walking better now. Nothing out of the ordinary between steps that makes him seem as if he might stop to forget where he is going. She knows it is the heat and she knows it is short-lived, but she holds his arm and presses her head against his chest. He has never complained. Let her. "Freeze," he calls, and the girls stop like statues until Pat and Comet walk slowly up to find their daughters like garden ornaments on the side of the pavement. "Aren't these nice?" he asks Pat. "Shall we take one home, have it in our living room? Better take two, no? We can use the taller one for a coatrack." He touches them on the head, and they become girls again. They run off shrieking with laughter, and Garret stares into his open palm.

She hates to leave him sitting awake in the kitchen, but she cannot keep her eyes open. She begs him to come to bed with her, but he stands and puts the kettle on. "I slept so late this morning," he explains. The black plastic in the broken window sucks in and out with the wind. It will not last more than a few days, she thinks. The council always takes about four months. "It's one and it needs you to have the light on. I'm so tired, it won't keep me up."

"Yes, I know." He brushes her forehead. She has not seen him undressed in several months. "Go on, you're asleep on your feet. . . . I'm going to [illegible] the yard." He will [illegible] the hall. She [illegible] open the door and disappears inside.

She [illegible] nothing like her, she thinks. A [illegible] to [illegible] the [illegible] Wouldn't [illegible]

they lived in London. Pat had to have the babies out on the train to see their grandmother. She comes now to Downham all the time because Pat needs her.

Pat hears the television go on in the other room. She thinks again about the Inspector. She is aroused to the way he looked at Garret, she hardly noticed. She cannot quite remember what the Inspector looked like. She remembers she has to call him again in the morning to let him know if there is anything else she can remember. "You've got a mind for this sort of thing," he had told her with another wink on the doorstep. He was going off to ask the neighbors if anybody had seen anything. "Don't hold your breath," he said.

She closes her eyes. She can feel that her children are asleep.

Sleep settles and then disappears. Three hours have passed. The television remains on, but she cannot decide if he is home. He will occasionally put the television on to cover the sounds of his comings and goings. He says he goes out and walks. She imagines a figure on the train tracks. She listens intently. If her children were gone, she would feel it immediately, she decides, but now she is listening as if for the sounds of a stranger, as if she worries someone has broken in.

She retrieves her robe from the floor. An orange ray of streetlight catches on the hangers in the closet. It occurs to her that he has not touched the doorknobs on the closet door. Should she tell the Inspector to come back and take fingerprints? Perhaps she remembers him touching the doorknob to steady himself as he stood up from hunching over her dress. One of his great paws rubbing off every trace of the men who took the dresses. What had seemed, momentarily, like a piece of evidence disappears. The image of the Inspector hunched in the closet now seems unpleasant, the way it did not at the time. Perhaps Comet is right: the older man fancied her. She crosses the room and bends down to touch the dress on the floor. It is a silk nightgown, not a dress at all.

From the doorway, she can see the television. A film with subtitle[s] French voice-over, a man with [illegible] glasses on his face. There is no figure [on] the couch in the living room, only [an] ashtray full of cigarettes. She wan[ders] into the kitchen, she turns cor[ner] slowly now. He is sitting at the ta[ble]. The lights are off. There is only [the] blue light from the flame beneath [the] kettle. She can see his outline: h[e] looking outside at the playgrou[nd]. Children who are too old are sta[nd]ing on the slide smoking cigaret[tes]. The kettle is boiling furiously. S[he] switches it off, which seems lik[e a] mistake as soon as she has done it.

"You cannot stay married t[o a] man like me," he says.

"What are you talking about?" [she] asks. She is standing behind h[im] looking down at his turned he[ad]. The television continues in the o[ther] room. She waits for him to [say] something more, to explain what [he] has said in different words, for th[e] the meaning could be quite differe[nt].

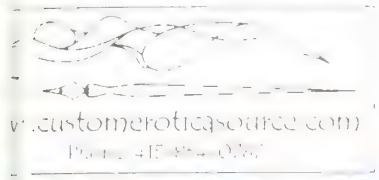
"I knew you before any of th[is]," she says. He seems to sink sligh[tly] lower, his arms between his kne[es]. "It's that lager. . . . I told you y[ou] shouldn't have. . . . Come to bed a[nd] get some sleep." She wants to tou[ch] him but will not. "Please, Garret."

He sits beside her on the b[ed] watching something on the w[all] across the room. He refuses to u[ndo] dress. She watches him as she fa[lls] asleep, his spine bowed away like [a] bird trying to stay out of the ra[in]. She wakes three times, each a fe[w] minutes apart—he is still there—[and] accepts her hand in one [of] his.

The Inspector will call in th[e] morning. Her mother will come [for] the weekend. Before the summe[r] Garret will move into a group hous[e]. He will have three different job[s], each for a short time. He will vis[it] Sarah and June on the weekend[s], come and sit at the table all day Sa[t]urday, all day Sunday, and mak[e] them laugh. Eventually, a man wh[o] owns his own garage will take Pat ou[t] for a drink and to the cinema once [or] twice a week. In London, there ar[e] young women out at night in Chris[t]ian Dior, Yves Saint Laurent, Gucc[i] they bought for ten pounds.

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LETTERS

[illegible] from page 11

[illegible] unworthy task for all of us [illegible] cerned, once and for all.

Bernard Radfar
Woodstock, N.Y.

Although I found the premise [illegible] David Samuels's "Rock Is Dead" to [illegible] full of interesting insights into a l[illegible] twentieth century meta-narrativ[illegible] was absolutely astonished—and [illegible] phatically euphoric—to see that th[illegible] is another soul on this planet w[illegible] knows how to spell that disparag[illegible] and derogatory Yiddish word *shm*[illegible] There are so many writers, and se[illegible] ingly so many editors, who know [illegible] the spelling of the German w[illegible] *schmuck* (which rhymes with "boo[illegible] a noun that refers to jewelry and or[illegible] mentation, and which is hardly[illegible] much value as an insult. Being [illegible] eternal optimist, I see this rec[illegible] demonstration of knowledge on [illegible] difference between *schmuck* a[illegible] *shmuck* as a very positive move f[illegible] ward into the new millennium.

Jonathon Schmuck
Canberra, Australia

Enlightenment's Shadow

Pico Iyer's essay "The End of E[illegible] pire" [Memoir, December] is a [illegible] markable non-confession. The a[illegible] thor's own clear-eyed complacer[illegible] and his enlightened rootlessness [illegible] these virtues provide the glitteri[illegible] foil for his unfortunate friend's thr[illegible] dom to colonial England's arrog[illegible] self-image. Iyer's double enacts t[illegible] tragedy of the colonized: a life-co[illegible] suming, idolatrous imitation of t[illegible] ex-master, tormented by the blaspl[illegible] mous solecisms of the frivolous a[illegible] irreverent—yet still bigoted—he[illegible] to greatness. Excluded and betray[illegible] by his beloved country, Iyer's frie[illegible] retains all the dignity of a cucko[illegible] Why expose such post-colonial d[illegible] content—such inverted reflected [illegible] one's own sight? Surely, the germ [illegible] confession lies in the ascription of [illegible] frailty to the doppelganger.

David Lauk
Seattle

Playfair Square

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

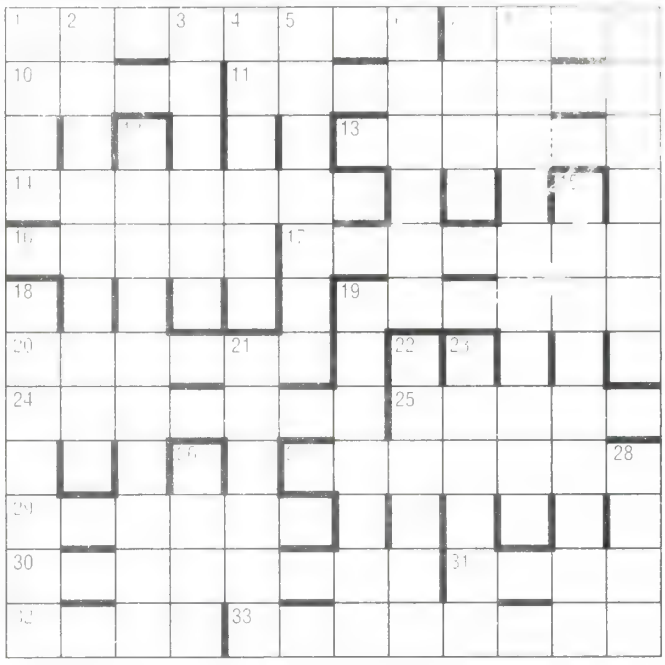
In a Playfair code square, a key word (or any length) in which no letter recurs is arbitrarily chosen and written down, followed by the rest of the alphabet in order (I and J counting as the same letter) starts to make a 5×5 square.

In this example, the word BANKRUPTCY is the key word. To encode a word, one first splits it into pairs of letters, e.g., HE LL O. The pair HE becomes EH, the letters at the other opposite corners of the rectangle of letters. Note that LL would not be split but LO becomes RP. For two letters in the same row or column, use the letters immediately to the right of (or below) each. For last letters of a row or column, use the first. Thus RP would become PU and PU would become BA. Consequently, HELLO would be encoded as EHRPBA.

B	A	N	K	R
U	P	T	C	Y
D	E	F	G	H
I	L	M	O	Q
S	V	W	X	Z

Answers to the six numbered clues are to be entered in the diagram in encoded forms, using a Playfair square of which the key word has to be discovered. By solving these clues and comparing the answers with the coded forms (which will take shape in the diagram as regular answers are inserted), equations will result that will enable the solver to discover, by logical deduction, the key word and to complete the puzzle.

Answers include three proper nouns and one foreign word, one of the encoded words is a variant spelling. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 83.



KEY WORD

Across

1. *Having too much fun exercising, say?* (8)
7. In the drug together upset all heart of the clinic (4)
10. Pans and cups (4)
11. I'm building down below us, and I echo all over (8)
13. In quasi desperation, runs lines to the heart (6)
14. Nazi art shaped with a ruler (7)
16. Indian, last character you'll find in a resort, etc. (5)
17. Red thief gets in before English woman, leaving (7)
19. *Zip but a END into the state pipe, really desperate* (6)
20. *Crowds entomologists portray as infected* (6)
24. African plants three bachelors around church (7)
25. Sketches dirt, with nothing corrected (5)
27. Crowds in skimpy bikinis — set right in the head (7)
29. Cat sounds from an historic flower (6)
30. A kind of unwillingness (8)
32. Accompaniment for listening to storyteller? (4)
33. *Lumpy, peculiar man's name as by Achilles* (8)

Down

1. Come out with, engage the incredulity (4)
2. Asking why the French who I phone mostly are [illegible] (9)
3. He [illegible] interest in and [illegible] turned sour, corrupt comparatively? (6)
4. Pitch six, when not touched on the rocks (6)
5. Answers in broken English, using bad language (7)
6. Extract from "Sarlat Illustrated" (6)
8. [illegible] (4)
9. Declaring [illegible] for bankruptcy, if the parts arrive at the wrong order (6)
15. [illegible] (7)
18. Heard [illegible] and, going around (7)
21. Spice [illegible] (7)
23. [illegible] (6)
26. [illegible] (4)
28. [illegible] (4)

Contest Rules: [illegible] 1992. [illegible] the first three correct solutions opened [illegible] the May issue. Winners [illegible] Lawrence Youngblood, Lakehurst, New Jersey.

HATE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Today, over a hundred years after the founding of the Ku Klux Klan, fewer than one in three U.S. hate groups are Klan-affiliated, and most are not based in the South. In other regions, chapters of neo-Nazi and Skinhead organizations far outnumber those of the Klan, as do the ministries of racist religious sects in the West, many empowered by the political rise of the Christian right. Since 1996 the number of U.S. hate groups has jumped 25 percent, solidifying strongholds in rust-belt suburbs and immigrant urban hubs. According to Alabama's Southern Poverty Law Center, which has tracked the phenomenon since 1971, the expansion reflects blue-collar job losses from international trade agreements and burgeoning economic inequity, which, coupled with hundreds of Internet sites, have helped to foment a fresh round of old-fashioned xenophobia. As new census results feed racist deepest fears and increasing computer access helps spread their voices, the overseas foes of the twentieth century may come to seem tame in comparison to the plugged-in mobs awaiting their turn just down the block.

Active U.S. Hate Groups

KU KLUX KLAN (163 chapters)
46 Christian white-supremacist groups, descended from the organization founded in 1865.

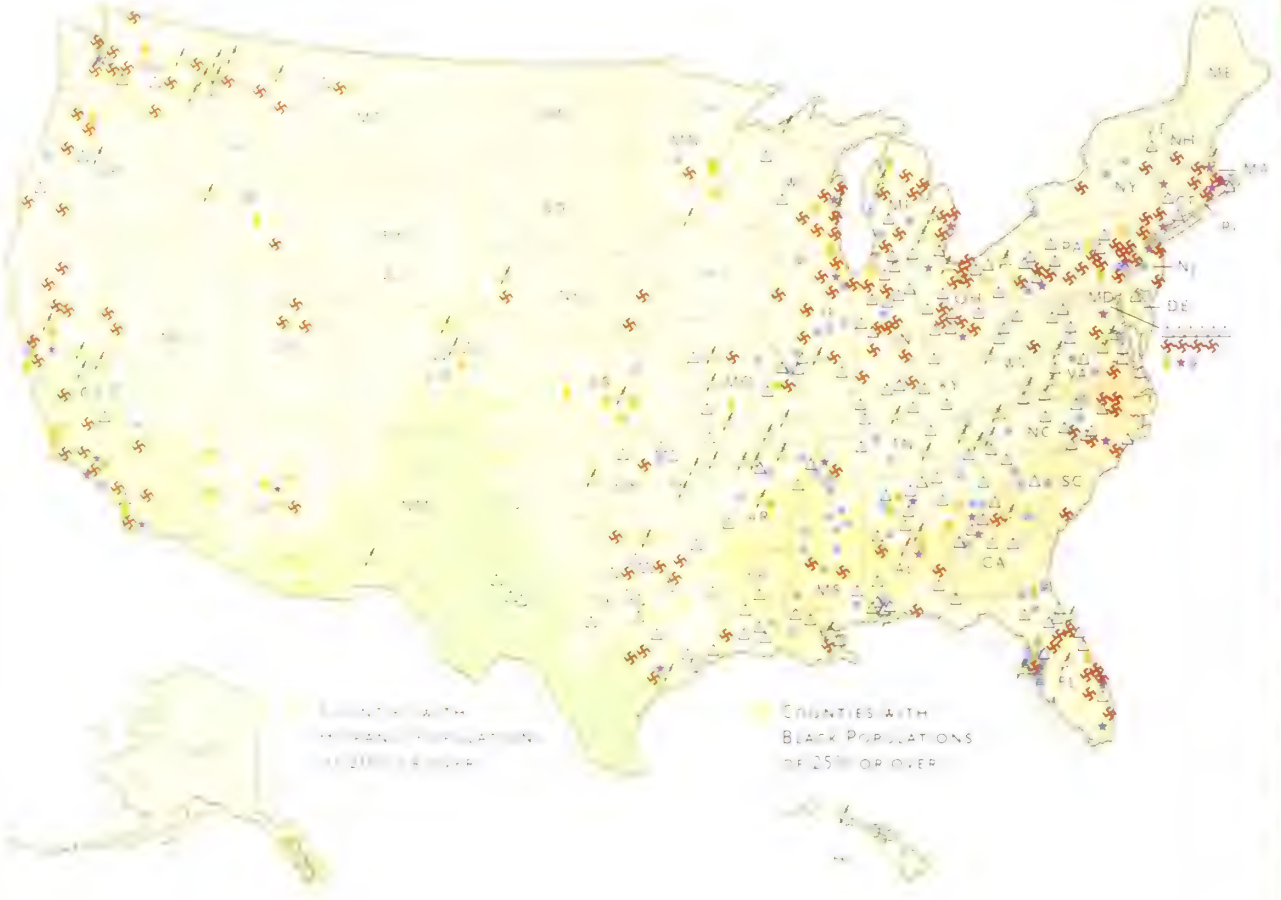
NEO-NAZI (151 chapters)
24 fascist white-supremacist groups, many promoting atheism or Odinism, based on ancient European polytheism.

CHRISTIAN IDENTITY (62 congregations)
Religious ministries and organizations with racist tenets.

SKINHEAD (48 chapters)
24 fascist white-supremacist groups, many with Nazi affiliations; most members are under 30 and migratory.

BLACK SEPARATIST (29 chapters)
2 groups advocating race-based hatred.

OTHER (84 organizations)
Media outlets, publishing houses, political parties, and other miscellaneous groups advocating hate-based policies.



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April

FUTURE'S HISTO

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HARPER'S



MAID TO ORDER

The Politics of Other Women's Work

By Barbara Ehrenreich

THE FALL

Fiction by Jonathan Franzen

REVISING VIETNAM, AGAIN

A New History Argues That Kennedy Might Have Pulled Us Out

By James William Gibson

TREKKING THE CITY OF LIGHT

Exorbitantly Abroad with Mademoiselle du Pamplemousse

By James McManus

Also: Ian Frazier, Bill Roorbach, and Paul West

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HARPER'S

FOUNDED [illegible]
APRIL 2000

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UNDER THE WEATHER

Our featured archive writer this month is Sherwood Anderson, [illegible]–1941

ILLUSTRATION BY TULLIO PERICOLI

Cover: *Photograph by [illegible]*

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HARPER'S

LETTERS

Messing with Texas

Whew! Joe Conason's tale of George W. Bush's interlocking financial dealings ["Notes on a Native Son," February] is indeed complex. But I managed to plow my way through to the end. Let me know if I got the issues straight: A rich Democrat was appointed by a Democratic governor to the University of Texas Board of Regents. He oversaw investments of UT's trust funds in a number of ventures owned or managed by rich people, many of whom seem to be Republicans. These investments produced healthy returns for UT, more than the result for the average actively managed investment fund over the same period of time. But the result was significantly less than some people (say, a prospective New York senator) can sometimes manage. Oh, yes, this man subsequently contributed to the campaign of his patron's successor, Bush, who, it turns out, is a rich Republican. I think I've captured most of it here—in far fewer words.

J. D. Freund
Sacramento, Calif.

It is unfortunate that Joe Conason did not call the Chancellor's Office or the office of the Board of Regents at the University of Texas System when he was preparing his article about UT System investments and former regent Thomas O. Hicks. Apart from a brief call by a *Harper's Magazine* staff member to the University of Texas Investment Management Co. (UTIMCO), the system's investment manager, no attempt was made to seek comment from the university system.

Because no effort was made to interview UT or UTIMCO officials, the article presents a distorted view of university investments. With only your article to go by, a reader would not be in a position to understand the rigorous public accountability of UTIMCO and other key issues related to UT investment policies and practices.

Investment proposals are developed by the UTIMCO staff without consideration of political affiliations. Recommendations are made on the basis of the staff's due diligence, and the board does not consider any potential investment that has not been recommended by the staff.

Conason failed to note that the UTIMCO staff and nine-member board are subject to a strict ethics policy. The board's decision to accept a staff recommendation requires five votes. Hicks had one vote, which he exercised on the basis of his judgment about what would be in the fiduciary interest of the investments and their beneficiaries.

UTIMCO is in no way "freed from public accountability," and its actions have not been characterized by a "conflict of interest" or "political favoritism,"

[illegible] *Harper's Magazine* welcomes readers' responses. [illegible] mail to letters@harpers.org. Harper's Magazine, 666 Broadway, New York, NY, 10012. [illegible] at letters@harpers.org. [illegible] by phone, fax, and electronic [illegible]. [illegible]

Conason alleges UTIMCO is subject to the Texas Public Information Act. Numerous detailed and audited reports, as well as minutes of UTIMCO board meetings, have been readily available to the public since 1996. Although UTIMCO is not subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act, the board conducts business as if it were.

In the interest of fairness, it seems to us that Conason should have sought our views on these and other issues raised by the article.

William H. Cunningham
Chancellor
The University of Texas System

Thomas G. Ricks
President and CEO
UTIMCO
Austin, Tex.

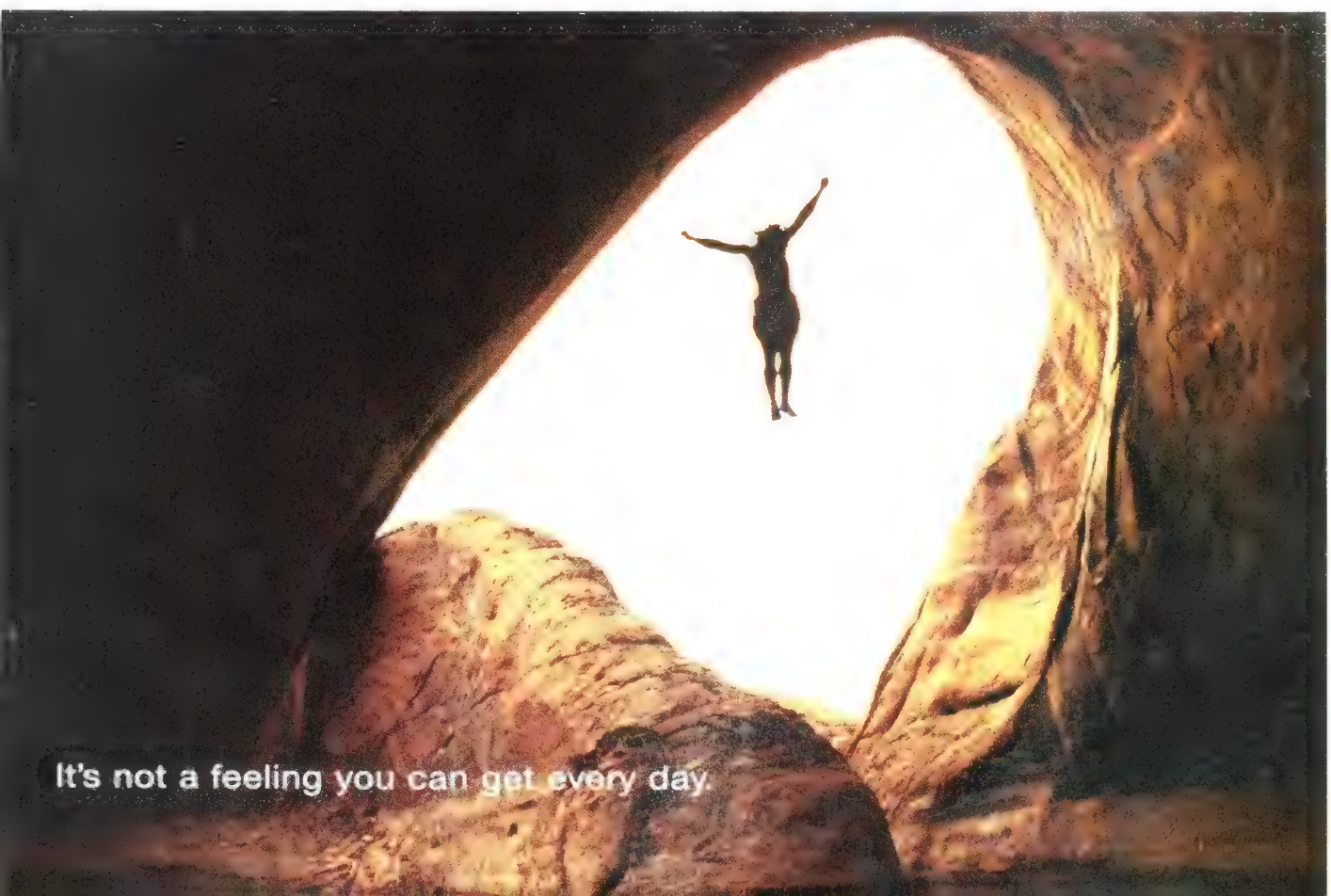
Although I knew that the *New York Post* had labeled Joe Conason one of "Hillary Clinton's bootlickers," I agreed to do an interview with him. That was a mistake. He wrote, and surprisingly *Harper's Magazine* published, an article replete with factual errors, misrepresentations, and false conclusions. It's no wonder the general public so distrusts the media.

Thomas O. Hicks
Dallas

Joe Conason erroneously describes a transaction involving Crescent Real Estate Equities Company, and then, based on that, infers a "special commission" contract between Crescent and Ross Perot. This is inaccurate and misleading.

In May 1997, Crescent acquired over $300 million in assets from companies related to Don Carter. Most of the assets were office buildings in Dallas. However, the assets included, at the insistence of Carter, a 12.38 percent limited partnership interest in the Dallas Mavericks (ultimately owned in part by Crescent through a separate company). This 12.38 percent interest had been retained by Carter when, in mid-1996, his company sold the majority interest in the Dallas Mavericks to companies controlled by Perot. As part of the Carter assets, Crescent also purchased from Carter promissory notes, which Carter's company had received from [illegible] company [illegible] the Mavericks. Ross Perot, Carter [illegible] partnership [illegible] four promissory notes [illegible] was contingent upon [illegible] meeting built in [illegible] a specified period of time. All four notes were received by Carter [illegible] pany as part of the purchase price [illegible] majority interest in the team.

When Crescent acquired Carter's [illegible] and other assets from Carter's company in May of 1997, Crescent acquired the "contingent note" along with the other notes Carter's companies had received upon the sale of the majority interest in the Mavericks. Crescent continued to hold the contingent note until it sold all of the Mavericks-related assets it owned to Perot in a transaction that closed in October 1999. As a result of that sale, Crescent no longer owns an interest in any assets relating to the Mavericks. To my knowledge, no amounts have been paid under the contingent note to any holder. The contingent note was never collected by Crescent.



Fort Worth

Clear and Present Danger

Jonathan Schell's essay concerning our ongoing nuclear crisis ["The Unmarked Twentieth Century," January] correctly notes that the Clinton Administration's plans to develop an anti-ballistic missile defense system are incompatible with the terms of the 1972 ABM treaty and its subsequent protocol. However, the treaty was drafted at a time when the prospect of nuclear-weapon states such as North Korea and Iran seemed quite remote. Today that threat is on the verge of becoming a reality. Leaving the nation undefended against even the most primitive nuclear threats thus has a very different meaning in the year 2000 than it had a quarter century ago.

Since the cost of the administration's plans is negligible compared with the savings that would result from stopping even a few nuclear warheads from reaching their targets on U.S. soil, there are really only two questions at issue: Will it work, and what will the likely Russian response be? I would hold out that claims of technology will work against a small number of first-generation warheads such as North Korea is likely to possess, and will not work against the bigger and more sophisticated threat Russia is capable of unleashing.

This is, of course, precisely the goal the administration has in mind—to prevent rogue states of nuclear leverage while assuring the Russians of an effective deterrent. You don't have to embrace every detail of Clinton Administration strategy to see that the Russians have little to no right to be concerned, and that we can no longer tolerate the risks that result from being completely defenseless against nuclear aggression.

Vincent L. Murphy
Director of Operations
Lexington Institute
Arlington, Va.

The theme of Jonathan Schell's essay is that the ending of a story determines its meaning. Perhaps the same applies to a story's beginning, or its setting. Schell begins in and focuses on Europe, the center of world civilization, though Belgian King Leopold's murderous Congo is presented as an ominous preface. Schell chooses the obvious and plausible August 1914 as page one of the story of a century of extermination. Based on this beginning and place, culpability for extermination originates with the European instigators of total war and their totalitarian offspring. American hands are sullied when they oppose this evil, "prepar[ing] the ground for more evil."

What if we were to perform a different "thought experiment" by beginning the story at alternate times and places? Here are some picks, as seen from end-of-millennium Canada: a mid-Atlantic slaver, circa 1776; the American Great Plains, December 28, 1890; rural Central America, 1954–1997.

Allan Zahara
Hartington, Ontario

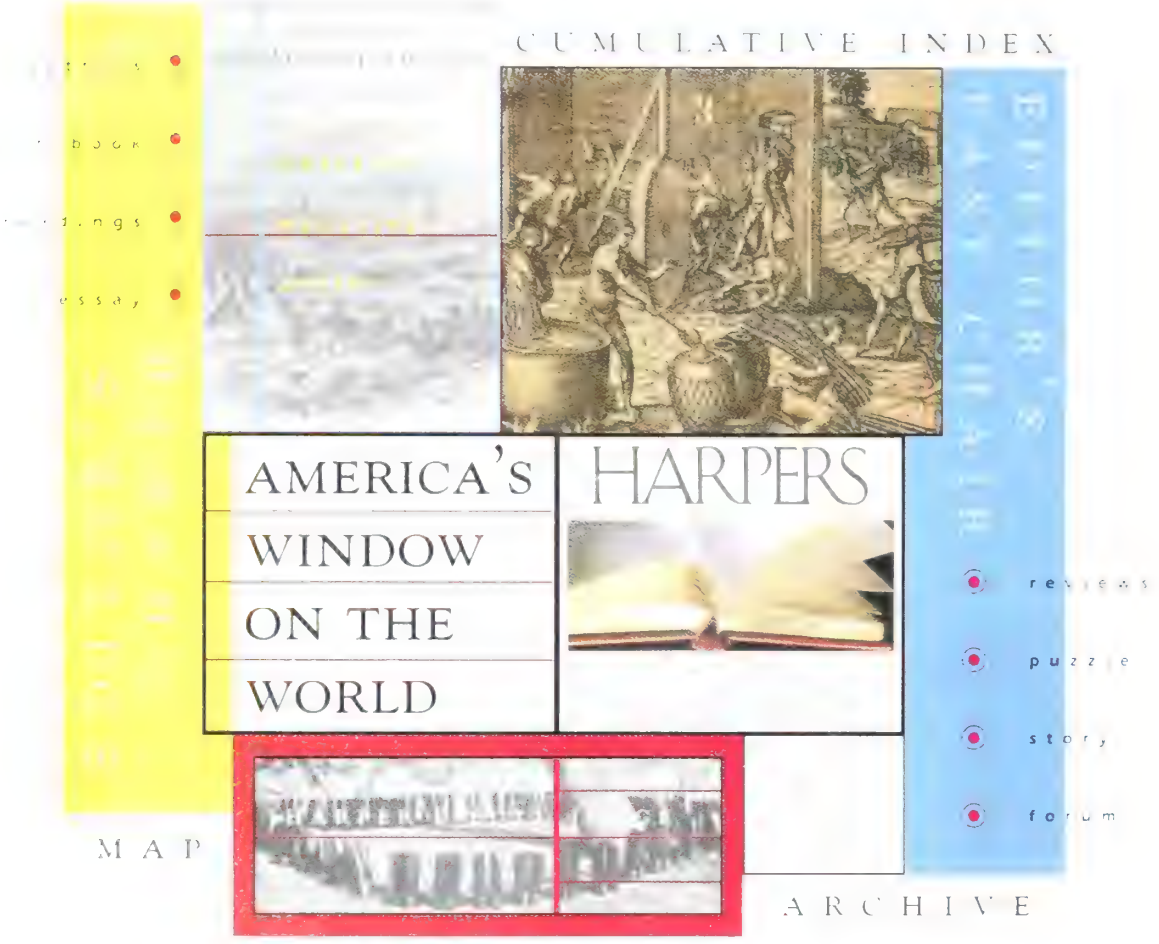
Smile, You're on Gnat-Cam

Your forum on privacy ["The Searchable Soul," January] focused on how personal data can be collected and possibly abused by corporations. Panelists touched on surveillance technologies such as DNA fingerprinting. Half a century after its publication, is the dark vision of Orwell's master-

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NOTEBOOK

Stupor Mundi

By Lewis H. Lapham

'Come, sir, cannot I prevail upon you to go to sea? A man-of-war is the very thing for a philosopher, above all in the Mediterranean: there are the birds, the fishes—I could promise you some monstrous strange fishes—the natural phenomena, the meteors, the chance of prize-money. For even Aristotle would have been moved by prize-money. . . .'

'A ship must be a most instructive theatre for an inquiring mind.'

'Prodigiously instructive, I do assure you:, Doctor.'

Patrick O'Brian

Newly commissioned as a captain in the Royal Navy, a young Jack Aubrey presents his assurance to Stephen Maturin, a learned but unemployed physician, on the afternoon of April 2, 1800, over a plate of oysters in Port Mahon, Minorca. The two men sit at a table in the bow window of an inn with a handsome view of the eighteenth-century shipping in the harbor—square-rigged naval vessels, Algerian xebecs, miscellaneous snows, pinks, settees, trabacolos—and their conversation has come to the point of the doctor accepting the warrant of surgeon aboard H. M. S. *Sophie*, a fourteen-gun sloop bound for Sardinia and the north Italian coast.

So begins, in the early pages of *Master and Commander*, the long voyage that carries the captain and the doctor twice around the globe, through the smoke of the Napoleonic wars, in and out of the social and political scenery that was England in the reign of George III. Before Patrick O'Brian died last January, in Dublin at the age of eighty-five, he had extended the narrative into a series of twenty novels and furnished his readers with a course of prodigious instruction. I know of no other set of books in which I take such unqualified delight, and their popular success (more than 5 million copies sold, translations into nineteen languages, a Web site, a new atlas, a book of maps) I accept as proof that the rumors about the end of literacy have been much exaggerated. The television networks and the Internet undoubtedly have done a good deal of damage to the art of letters, but O'Brian can be read with pleasure by so many people in both Omaha and Osaka, not so much damage that the hope of rescue has been entirely lost.

I came across O'Brian's writing in the summer of 1992, haphazardly on a Friday afternoon when I was on the way to Rhode Island for a weekend up to require an informed remark about a yacht rounding Brenton Point on the long starboard tack for Martha's Vineyard and the Cape. A reviewer's copy of H. M. S. *Surprise* had arrived that day in the mail, the cover illustration showing the foremast and bowsprit of a twenty-eight-gun frigate in an Arab port, and I picked it up confident in the opinion that I was venturing into familiar waters. Long acquainted with the adventures of C. S. Forester's Horatio Hornblower—deck crew watching out the guns and the drummers rousing up the starboard watch to the tune of "Heart of Oak"—I'd been fond of seaborne stories ever since as a child of seven I'd listened to my mother read aloud the whole of *Moby Dick*.

The year was 1942, Admiral Halsey's Pacific fleet clearly in sight in San Francisco Bay, and I'd been attracted to the book by [illegible] Kent drawings of Queequeg and the Whale. My father, [illegible], had been a prosperous [illegible] company (forty cargo vessels in the intercoastal trade) before the [illegible] attack on Pearl Harbor. [illegible] apprehensive all the days on December 8, 1941, but we still had hope that some of them would be returned. My mother thought Melville's prose too difficult and his story too abstract, but [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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Tenerife.

as a hundred prospective readers, always with the advice that they allow an interval—at least six months—to elapse before reading the next. Otherwise the ships sail without their full complement of stored memory, and it's easy to mistake Java Head for Table Mountain, [illegible]—"general considerations upon fish, a wholesome meat, though disliked by fishermen; Dover sole is commended; porpoises, frogs, puffins rated as fish for religious purposes by Papists"—with the discussions in the [illegible] *Salvation*.

What is most thrilling about the books is their spaciousness of mind. O'Brian writes from the early nineteenth-century premise that the world can be known and understood, or, if not understood, at least accurately perceived and lovingly examined, and he carries forward his long narrative in the same spirit of investigation that prompted Honoré de Balzac to write [illegible] and [illegible] stats. As much of the story takes place on land as it does at sea, the scenes of a London drawing [illegible] a single ship action in the Indian Ocean. The novels encompass the whole of a society as completely imagined as the England of Jane Austen. They present the portrait of an age afloat on the flood tide of the Enlightenment, all hands on deck keeping a sharp watch for monstrous strange fish-[illegible] mystery.

Maturin accepts Aubrey's invitation [illegible] Mozart, Boccherini, and old Bach. The voices [illegible] and goddesses [illegible] Tenerife and [illegible] Maturin's unsuspecting [illegible] melancholy opposed to Aubrey's [illegible] point between the two melodic lines [illegible] polyphonic variations on the theme [illegible]

The physician Maturin [illegible] dark, white-faced creature in a rusty black coat," his wig unpowdered and [illegible] in the truest sense" that much of [illegible] abroad ship with [illegible] served giant squid as well as [illegible] a skilled surgeon but also [illegible] in the Spanish and the French, [illegible] who can "whip your leg off in a moment, tell you the Latin name for anything that moves, . . . speaks language like a walking Tower of Babel." His unbounded curiosity prompts him to extensive digressions on the use of trocars, ball-scoops, saws, and bone-rasps (the rough surgery on the orlop-deck no better than a butcher's shambles) to reflections on the society of Augustan England (its manners, language, opinions, terms of endearment, modes of conveyance), general observations ("I have never yet known a man admit that he was either rich or asleep") and notes on the habits of the greater and lesser [illegible]

Aubrey's is the more splendid figure, "a most gallant, deserving officer," a thorough-paced Tory," rejoicing in fox hunts and toasted cheese, a romantic creature, "eager in the article of battle," apprenticed to the navy at the age of twelve, generous to a fault, but apt to mix up his schoolboy proverbs ("Gather ye rose-pods while ye may"; "They have chosen their cake and must lie on it"; "Here's a palm in Gilead"). Like Maturin a man who knows his trade, Aubrey approaches the world as a problem in navigation [illegible] by means of it has cheerfully repeated explanations ("in the unusual [illegible] landmen and on land for half-wits") that O'Brian acquaints the reader with the theory and practice of early-nineteenth-century seamanship—the distinction between steering small and sailing large, the proper storing of the gunner's powder (mealed, corned, best patent), the difference between the several kinds of cannon shot (bar, chain, case, grape, or plain round)

O'Brian sustains the counterpoint
etween the two voices across seven
eans and a span of roughly twenty
ars, almost always to as fine effect
in their first conversation in the
ow window at Port Mahon:

Aubrey—"What is Catalan?"

Maturin—"Why, the language of Catalonia—of the islands, of the whole of the Mediterranean coast down to Alicante. . . . Of Barcelona. Of Lerida. All the richest part of the peninsula."

Aubrey—"You astonish me. I had no notion of it. Another language, sir? But I dare say it is much the same thing—a *putain*, as they say in France?"

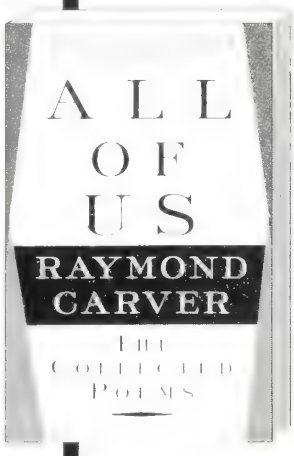
Maturin—"Oh, no, nothing of the kind—not like at all. A far finer language. More learned, more literary. Much nearer the Latin. And by the by, I believe the word is *patois*, sir, if you will allow me."

Aubrey—"*Patois*—just so. Yet I swear the other is a word: I learnt it somewhere."

Given longer space, I could multiply many times over the proofs of O'Brian's capacity for portraying women as well as men, for telling a love story with the same force and affection that he brings to his depiction of a rolling broadside fired into the rigging of a French privateer. Over the course of the novels he names upwards of 500 individuals, nearly all of them as memorably observed as Aubrey and Maturin. I could write a monograph about Diana Villiers, her impetuous spirit as changeable as the weather in the Gulf of Lions, and still I would lack occasion to mention Admiral Drury among his concubines and cassowaries in Penang, or the angry Mrs. Williams, "devoid of scruple, convinced of her divine rectitude," governing the affairs at Ashgrove Cottage with the iron hand of the Lord Protector. By the time I'd come to the last volume of the series (*Blue at the Mizzen*, published in November 1999, two months before the author's death), I could bring to mind at least thirty of his characters as easily as if I were listening to their voices in the hall.

To readers brought up in the modernist schools of literature, O'Brian's novels might seem insufficiently ambiguous, a trifle too Edwardian in their diction, books for boys belonging on

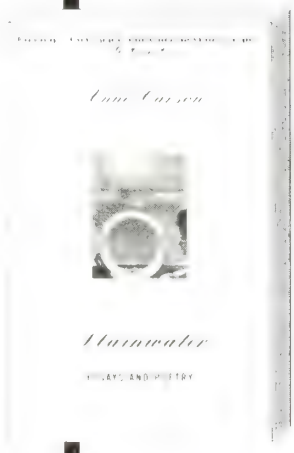
A CELEBRATION OF POETS AND POETRY



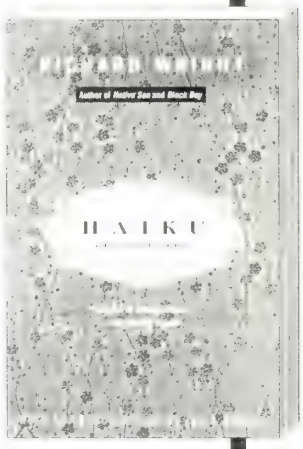
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the shelf with the tales told by Rudyard Kipling and Arthur Conan Doyle. All such criticism is not without a point. Having read other histories of Augustan England and the Napoleonic wars, I doubt that service in Admiral Lord Nelson's navy was quite so *all a tanto* as O'Brian asks his readers to believe, and I suspect that few of the officers in the British Channel Fleet possessed Captain Aubrey's skill in handling a ship or a violin. But here we have an author who writes so well that I can overlook his offenses against the canon of contemporary literary taste. His gift for language and his love of words show up on every page, evident in his knowing what to show and when to tell, his control of grammar and play of wit.

I soon found myself reading the novels with both an atlas and a dictionary close at hand; occasionally I copied out one or another of O'Brian's paragraphs (for the pleasure of the rhythm as well as for the lesson in rhetoric) and sometimes I made short lists of definition—of terms specific to sailing ships (grumlin-futtocks, kevel, becket, Bentinck courses, crosscatharpings, etc.), also of words unknown that fell graciously on my ear:

chouse—to dupe or swindle
mammothrept—a pampered child
Stupor Mundi—the marvel of the world, object of awe or wonder

O'Brian as an author met the requirement indicated by the latter phrase, but during the first years of my acquaintance with his writing, I knew nothing about the man. Nor did I come across many people in New York literary society who were conversant with his books. Those few of his readers whom I chanced to meet almost invariably tended to favor yacht-club blazers and the reactionary forms of politics—subscribers to *The Weekly Standard* and *National Review*, opposed in principle to the insult of an income tax, standing four-square and full-rigged on the side of property (that sacred text), florid gentlemen, well fed and heavyset, who struck me as being the sort of "thorough-paced Tories" likely to think that "a hundred lashes at the gangway" was just the thing to teach the slackers on society's lower cable tier a lesson in civility. They formed the majority of the other people present when I first met O'Brian in Apr

1995 aboard the frigate *Rose*, docked
the South Street Seaport in Man-
ttan. O'Brian's American publisher,
'. W. Norton, had provided the
ip—a frigate of the same design, era,
d dimension as Aubrey's beloved
rprise—as the setting for a party to
ark the publication of *The Com-
odore*. The quarterdeck was crowded
ith pillars of the investment com-
unity, shining with gold buttons and
ished with Mount Gay rum.

O'Brian I but briefly glimpsed. He
as seated splendidly aft, at a table un-
r the fine curve of the windows in the
ptain's great cabin. I made my own
olite compliment, wishing him joy in
s success, and from the few moments
equired by the formality I came away
ith the impression of a fierce intelli-
ence, the face hawklike and the ex-
ression sardonically amused, not as
all a man as I had supposed, stooped
nd almost frail but as watchful and
implacable as one of Maturin's wan-
lering Antarctic birds.

Before I met O'Brian a second time,
year later at a small dinner in an up-
own New York club, I had discovered
few facts about his life, work habits,
lace of residence, and sources of in-
piration. Twice married, he had lived
ince 1949 with his second wife in a
rench fishing village on the Roussil-
on coast below Perpignan. He was a
lose friend of Picasso's and an enthu-
iastic naturalist blessed with extraor-
linarily keen eyesight, said to be capa-
ble of distinguishing, at a long distance,
rook from a carrion crow. Although
his novels were filled with vivid de-
scriptions of landscapes as remote as
the Malabar coast and the Magellan
Strait, he was not the kind of writer
who traveled around the world with a
pencil and a camera. He relied on his
imagination and prodigious research,
exploring volumes of old maps and ear-
ly voyages, reading the *Naval Chronicle*
and magazines popular in London in
the years 1790–1820. Apparently he
wrote with a pen, first with his left hand
on the left-hand page in a bound note-
book, then on the opposite page with
his right hand.

The dinner at the Links Club, giv-
en by Michael M. Thomas, a columnist
for *The New York Observer*, cleared up
the difficulty about the character and
political sympathies of O'Brian's read-
ers. Only twelve people were present,
among them the authors Robert
Hughes and John Gregory Dunne, nei-
ther of whom qualified as mess mates of
the hard Republican right, as well as
Starling Lawrence, the editor at
Norton who had brought O'Brian's
novels to the United States in 1990,
and Richard Snow, the editor of *Amer-
ican Heritage* who had written, for the
New York Times, the first and foremost
of the welcoming reviews.

Table talk among New York literary
people ordinarily resembles a compet-
itive auction in a cotton pit, everybody
loudly interrupting one another and
bidding up the price of his own clev-
erness. Not, however, in the presence
of O'Brian. Well aware of his gifts as a
writer and thus acquainted with his ca-
pacity for irony (mortal irony, sir, lions
ain't in it), we conducted ourselves in
the manner of midshipmen seated at
dinner with the admiral aboard
Boadicea or *Ocean*, careful to remember
our spherical trigonometry and how
the ships were placed at Trafalgar and
the Nile. The table was burnished oak,
the silver reassuringly heavy, and the
conversation a match for the vintage
port—general considerations upon lit-
erature, a wholesome air but disliked by
critics; historical fiction commended;
reasons why authors of genre novels
seldom receive promotion to the rank
of genius; approving references to the
works of John Le Carré and Elmore
Leonard, an anecdote of a churlish ad-
jective once presented to Mr. Thomas
by a reviewer in the *Washington Post*.

The evening ended as satisfactorily as
one of Locatelli's quartets, on a sus-
tained chord of fond agreement and
mutual esteem. O'Brian was at work on
another manuscript, the *Surprise* still
somewhere in port or at sea, and we all
knew that one of these days, if not next
year then somewhere nearer the merid-
ian of the millennium, Aubrey was
bound to capture the prize of a French ad-
miral's blue flag. He did so in the last of
the novels, which now can be read and
reread not only as a completed work
but also, and probably to their best ad-
vantage, while bearing in mind Ma-
turin's observation that the arrival "can
amount to the sum of voyages" and that
a natural philosopher offered any de-
cent choice in the matter would do bet-
ter "to travel indefinitely." ■



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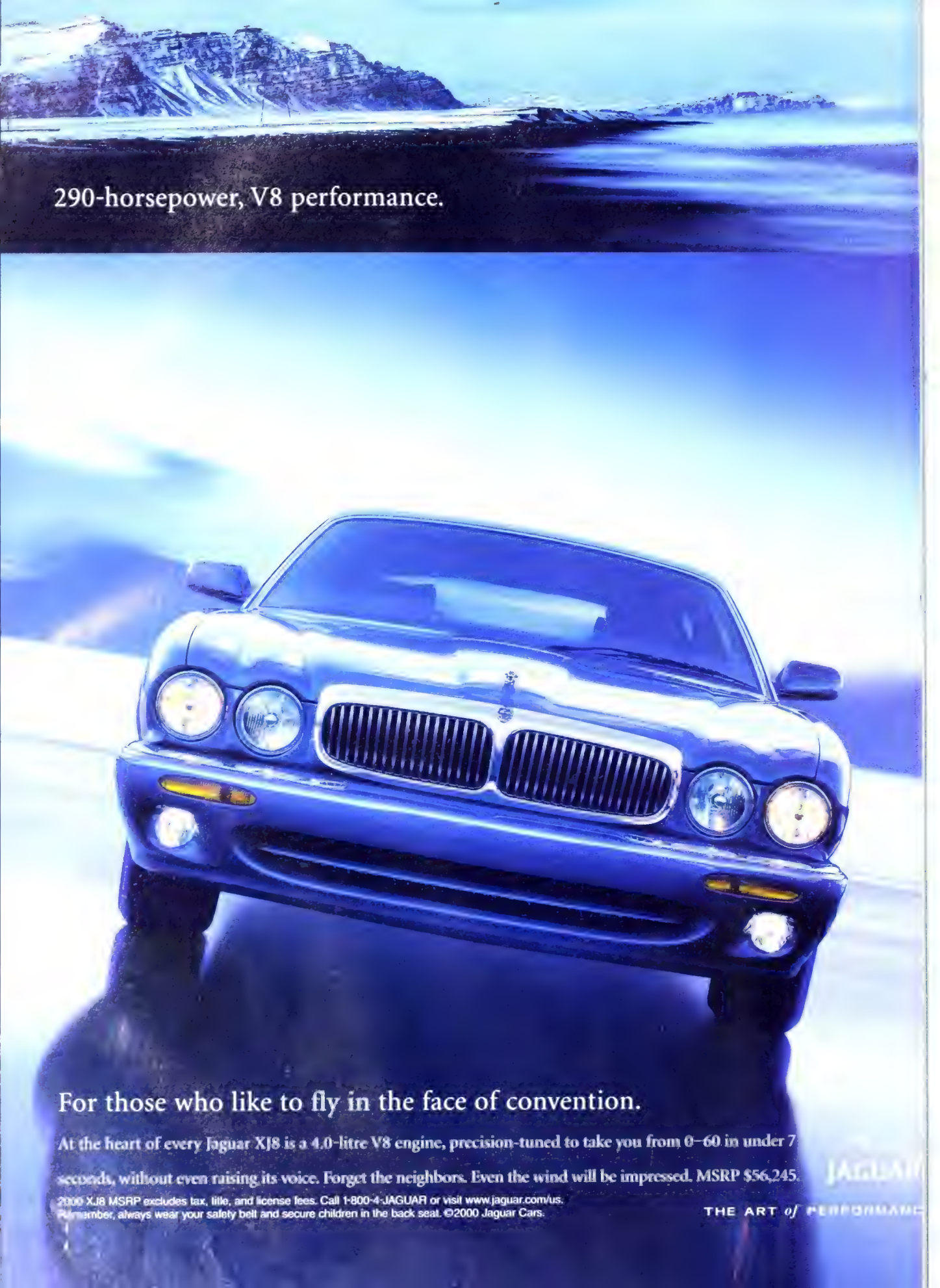
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HARPER'S INDEX

Chances that a managed care patient is unaware of [illegible] controlled in-network care : 2 in 3
Chance that an American without health insurance would be covered under Al Gore's proposed Health Care Act : 1 in 2
Percentage of eligible Texans who voted for George W. Bush for governor in 1994 and 1998, respectively : 27, 22
Portion of Texas industrial plants operating under "grandfathered" emissions rules that predate 1971's Clean Air Act : 1/2
Gallons of oil leaked into the Gulf of Mexico this year after an oil rig [illegible] underwater pipeline : 294,000
Estimated tons of PCBs that General Electric has leaked into the Hudson River since 1947, [illegible] dumping the toxin : 600
Estimated portion of whale, dolphin, and porpoise meat consumed in Japan last year whose pollution levels were toxic : 1/2
Maximum tonnage by which pollution reduced China's potential annual wheat production between 1994 and 1996 : 13,000
Tons of wheat China imported during this period : 10,000
Percentage change in foreign direct investment in Vietnam between 1991 and 1996 : +1,142
Percentage change since then : −45
Years it took Afghanistan to restore its international phone links after civil war [illegible] Ethiopia in 1993 : 7
Average number of minutes per day that Americans spend waiting for Web pages to download : 9
Percentage change since 1996 in the amount of time it takes a U.S. green-card holder to become a resident : +106
Percentage change since 1994 in the number of beds in INS detention facilities : +282
Number of face masks that Mexico's Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos has worn out since 1994 : 5
Number of the eight Zapatista demands to which the Mexican government agreed in 1996 that have been met : 0
Minimum number of laws passed in Peru since 1992 that violate at least one article of the country's constitution : 91
Percentage change between 1969 and 1998 in the annual number of planes hijacked worldwide : −89
Percentage change between 1997 and 1998 in the number of cholera cases : +99 (see page 96)
Factor by which Africa's cholera fatality rate exceeds the rate achievable with proper treatment and adequate sanitation : 5
Percentage change between 1965 and 1995 in the number of U.S. households that pay for housecleaning : +53
Percentage change between 1975 and 1998 in the size of a new U.S. home : +53 (see page 68)
Chance that an American earning more than $100,000 in 1988 was audited by the IRS : 1 in 18
Chance that an American earning this much in 1996 was : 1 in 44
Factor by which combined U.S. individual charitable donations in 1998 exceeded those of foundations and corporations : 6
Total return on a dollar invested in the "socially responsible" Domini 400 Social Index between 1990 and 2000 : $5.75
Total return on a dollar invested in the S&P 500 : $4.05
Length, in feet, of the longest soap bubble ever recorded : 105
Minutes of pregame snowball making allowed in the International Snow Battle Contest held this month in Finland : 30
Number of days a Norse woman incubated a bird's egg between her breasts last spring before giving up : 28
Age in years of the first baby born in Denmark last January, according to the hospital's computer : 100
Number of Americans who are at least this old : 92,000
Number of U.S. Census respondents in 1990 who identified themselves as "[illegible]" : 9,804,847
Percentage of them later requestioned by the Census who reported being white : 59
Number of former welfare recipients New York City trained since last April to work as phone psychics : 15
Number of flowers that prison inmates plant each spring at the Illinois State Fairgrounds : 110,000
Ratio of April showers to plants producing May flowers at the Springfield, Illinois, Park District last year : 1:1,571
Rank of Chicago among the windiest U.S. cities : 3rd
Rank of Dodge City, Kansas : 1st

Items cited that have been adjusted for inflation are from the [illegible] Economic Report of the President.
Harper's Index


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THE ART of PERFORMANCE

READINGS

[Essay]

THE COMING AGE

From the final chapter of From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Cultural Triumph and Defeat, *by Jacques Barzun, to be published next month by HarperCollins. Having chronicled, over the course of 790 pages, the history of modern Europe from the year 1500 to the present, Barzun ends his account with a prologue to the next 500 years. Barzun is the author of some thirty books and was for many years a professor of history at Columbia University.*

Herewith an undated and anonymous document from the late twentieth century. It is entitled "Let Us End with a Prologue."

The shape and coloring of the next era is beyond anyone's powers to define; if it were guessable, it would not be new. But on the character of the interval between us and the real tomorrow, speculation is possible. Within the historian lives a confederate who is an incurable pattern-maker and willing to risk the penalties against fortune-telling. Let the transitional state be described in the past tense, like a chronicler looking back from the year 2300.

The population was divided roughly into two groups; they did not like the word "classes." The first, less numerous, was made up of the men and women who possessed the virtually inborn ability to handle the products of *techne* and master the methods of physical science, especially mathematics—it was to them what Latin had been to the medieval clergy. This modern elite had the geometrical mind that singled them out for the life of research and engineering. Lord Bacon had predicted that once the ways and biases of science were enthroned, this type of mind would be found relatively common. Dials, toggles, buzzers, gauges, icons on screens, light-emitting diodes, symbols and formulas to save time and thought—these were for this group of people the source of emotional satisfaction, the means of rule over others, the substance of shoptalk, the very joy and justification of life.

The mind was shaped and the days filled by these intricacies as had been done in earlier eras by theology, poetry, and the fine arts. The New Man saw the world as a storehouse of all items retrievable through a keyboard, and whoever added to the sum was made welcome. He, and more and more often She, might be an inventor or theorist, for the interest in hypotheses about the creation of the cosmos and the origin of life persisted unsatisfied, from the previous era. The sense of being close to a final formulation lasted for over 200 years.

It was from this class, no group, that the governors and heads of institutions were recruited. The parallel with the Middle Ages is plain: clerics in one case, cybernists in the other. The latter took pride in the fact that in ancient Greek *kybernetes* meant helmsman, governor. It validated their position as rulers of the unwashed, which by then could neither read nor count. But these less capable citizens were [illegible] barbarians. To be sure, schooling

would have been good for them that had been provided in the late twentieth century. Some now argue that the schooling was at fault, not the people. But when the teachers themselves declared children unteachable, the Deschooling Society movement rapidly consumed credibility to its view.

What saved the masses from brutishness was the survival (though in odd shapes) of a good deal of literature and history from the 500 years of Western culture, mingled with a sizable intrusion of the Eastern. Some among the untutored group taught themselves to read, compiled digests, and by adapting great stories and diluting great ideas provided the common people with a culture over and above the televised fare. It was already well mixed and stirred by the twenty-first century. Public readings, recitals of new poems based on ancient ones, simple plays, and public debates about the eternal questions (which bored the upper class) furnished the minds and souls of the ordinary citizen. This compost of longings, images, and information resembles that which the medieval monks, poets, and troubadours fashioned out of the Graeco-Roman heritage. Religious belief in the two ages alike varied from piety, deep or conventional, to mysticism.

As for social organization, the people were automatically divided into interest groups by their residence and occupation, or again by some personal privilege granted for a social purpose. The nation no longer existed, superseded by regions, much smaller but sensibly determined by economic instead of linguistic and historical unity. Their business affairs were in the hands of corporation executives whose view of their role resembled that of their medieval ancestors. The accumulation not of territories but of companies and controls over markets was the one aim of life, sanctified by efficiency. The pretext was rarely borne out, but the game prospered and the character of the players followed another medieval prototype: constant nervousness punctuated by violent and arbitrary acts against persons and firms. Dismissals, resignations, wholesale firings of workers and staffs, were daily events. There being no visible bloodshed, wounds and distress were veiled. The comprehensive welfare system improved since its inception, repaired the damage. Its decisions being all made by computer on the basis of each citizen's set of identity numbers, there could be few tenable grievances. Those due to typing errors would be corrected in time. There was thus no place for the citizen-voter and the perpetual clash of opinions that had paralyzed representative governments.

Not only was the goal of equality preserved but the technique of it was enhanced. Faith in science excluded dissent on important matters; the method brings everyone to a single state of mind. On the workaday plane, the dictates of numerical studies guided the consumer and the parent, the old and the sick. The merit system decided, by coincidence, no doubt, as it had begun, with a new world dis-

[Merger]

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Their agreement reached in January between Halfway, Oregon, a city of 345, and Half.com, Inc., an Internet company based in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania.

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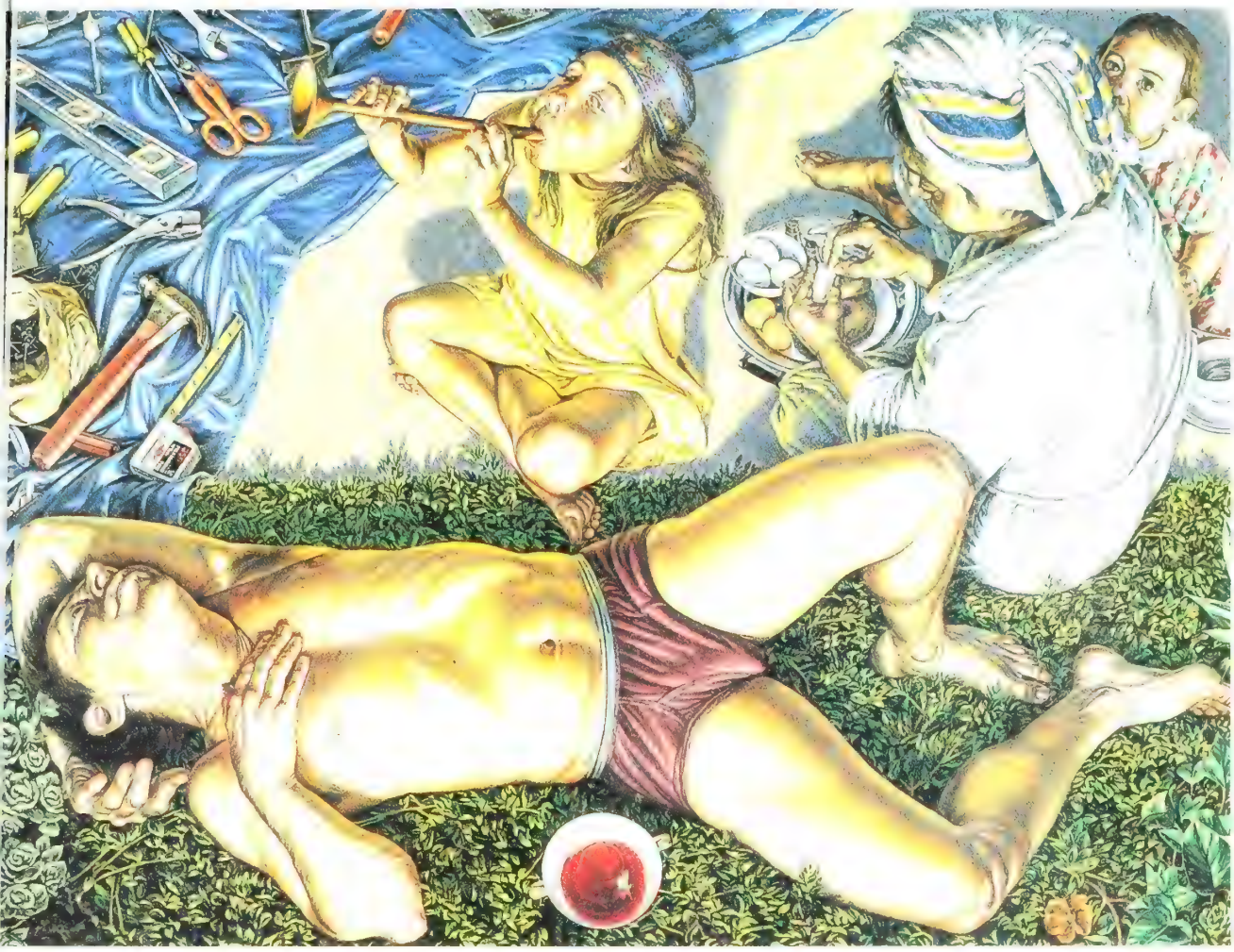
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Each sign created or modified, whether at the direction of or by the City, used to advertise or call attention to the fact that the following language: "Welcome to the First Dot Com City in America, Half.com, Oregon (a.k.a. Halfway, Oregon)."

The term "Halfway, Oregon," in any sign or any document shall be used only in the context "Halfway, Oregon." The Company will have final approval on each sign and advertisement [illegible] in size and style.

The Company will make reasonable attempts to provide the City with the Company's site and free memberships to ensure that the City is portrayed in the most favorable light.



Noah Forgotten, *a painting by F. Scott Hess. His real name, as displayed at Dragonfly and the Hudson Museum, is [illegible]*

ease, transmitted (also like the old) through sexual contact. But intense medical research in due course achieved cure and prevention, and the chief killer ailment was once more heart disease, most often linked to obesity. The control of nature apparently stopped short of self-control. But Stat Fite, ensured by the many specialized government agencies, inspired successful programs and propaganda in many domains of the secure society. The moral anarchy complained of in the early days of the Interim rather suddenly gave way to a strict policing of everybody by everybody else. In time it became less exacting, and although fraud, corruption, sexual promiscuity, and tyranny at home or in the office did not disappear, these vices, having to be concealed, attracted only the bold or the reckless. And even they agreed that the veil is a sign not of hypocrisy but of respect for human dignity.

As for peace and war, the former was the mark that distinguished the West from the rest of the world. The numerous [illegible] ident and America formed a loose confederation obeying rules from Brussels and Washington in concert, they were [illegible] law-abiding, overwhelming in offensive weaponry, and they [illegible] peoples and their factions eliminate one another until exhaustion [illegible] into their plans.

After time [illegible] a little over a century, the Western mind was [illegible] by a blight it was [illegible]. The attack was so severe that the overentertained people, led by a handful of restless men and women from the upper orders, demanded reform and finally imposed it in the usual way, by repeating one idea. These radicals [illegible] to erase the old neglected literature, [illegible] text, and maintained that they were the record of a fuller life. They [illegible] time with a fresh eye to the monu-

ment—all [illegible] about, they reopened the volley-ruins of [illegible] attacks that had here seemed so unfortunately [illegible] that nobody went near them. They distinguished styles and the different ages of [illegible] interference—in short, they found a past full of life. But to create a new present. Fortunately, they were [illegible] amateurs (except for a few pedants), and their twisted view of their sources laid the foundation of our nascent—or perhaps one should say, renascent—culture. It has resurrected enthusiasm in the young and talented [illegible] exclaiming what a joy it is to be alive.

It must hardly be pointed out that this anonymous author's extravaganza did not represent any body of contemporary opinion, only his own. Nor can it be ascertained when and on what grounds his vision of the future occurred to him.

[Account]

HINDSIGHT INTO THE FUTURE

From "A History of the Past, Part II," a narrative compiled by Anders Henriksson from statements found in student papers over the last fifteen years; his first such composition, "Life Reeked with Joy," was published in 1983. Henriksson is a professor of history at Shepherd College, in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The essay appeared in the Winter issue of The Wilson Quarterly.

From the secondary sources we are given hindsight into the future. Hindsight, after all, is caused by a lack of foresight.

Civilization was [illegible] the Nile about 50,000 years ago. The Nile was a river that had some water in it. Every year it would flood and irritate the land. Mesapatamia was squigged in a valley near the Eucalptus river. Hinduism was exotic. Judaism was the first monolithic religion. Old Testament profits included Moses, Amos, and Confucius, who believed the Ethel Piety. Moses was told by Jesus Christ to lead the people out of Egypt into the Promised Land. The Book of Exodus describes this trip and the amazing things that happened [illegible] the Ten Commandments were [illegible] on the Tablets of the Sinai Canal. David was a fictional character in the Bible who fought with Goliath, a [illegible] giant. He gloried the people with [illegible] many erections and saved them from attacks by the Philipines.

Helen of Troy launched a thousand ships with her face. The Trojan War raged between the Greeks and the Lorries. We know about this thanks to Homer's story about Ulysses Grant and Iliad, the painful wife he left behind. King Xerox of Persia invaded Greace, but fell off short at the battle of Thermosalami. Alexander the Great conquered Persia, Egypt, and Japan. Sadly, he died with no hairs. Religion was polyphonic. Featured were gods such as Herod, Mars, and Juice.

The Greeks were important at culture and science. Plato invented reality. The Sophists justified themselves by changing relatives whenever this needed to be done. Lust was a must for the Epicureans. U. Clid proved that there is more than one side to every plain. Pythagasaurus fathered the triangle. Archimedes made the first steamboat and power drill.

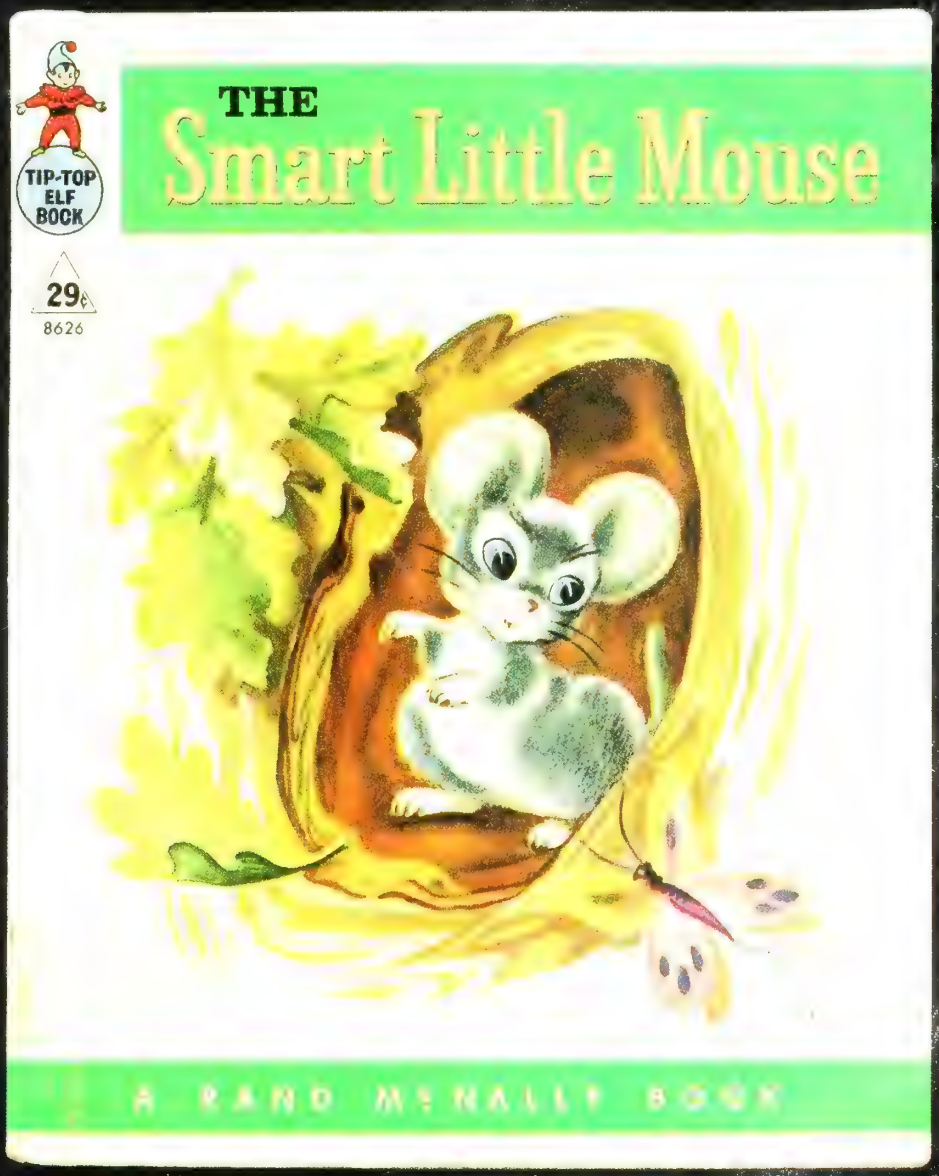
Rome was founded sometime by Uncle Remus and Wolf. Roman upperclassmen demanded to be known as Patricia. Senators wore purple tubas as a sign of respect. Spartacus led a slave revolt and later was in a movie about this. The Roman republic was bothered by intestinal wars. Cesar inspired his men by stating, "I came, I saw, I went." He was assinated on the Yikes of March, when he is reported to have said, "Me too, Brutus!"

A tidul wave of Goths, Huns, Zulus, and others impacted Rome. Athena the Hun rampaged the Balkans as far as France. Society was crumpity. Neo-Platonists celebrated the joy of self-abuse. When they finally got to Italy, the Australian Goths were tired of plundering and needed to rest. A German soldier put Rome in a sack. During the Dark Ages it was mostly dark.

Medeval society was arranged like a tree, with your nobles in the upper twigs and your pesants grubbing around the roots. This was known as the manurial system, where land was passed through fathers to sons by primogenuflecture. Power belonged to a patriarchy empowering all genders except the female. Nuns, for example, were generally women. In the early part of the Middle Ages female nuns were free to commit random acts of contrition and redemption. Later they were forcibly enclustered in harems. Russia was run over by Batu Cohen and crushed under the Mongol yolk. Certain tribes of India practiced voodoo innuendo. The Crusades, meanwhile, enlarged opportunities for travel.

Historians today feel that the renaissance

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and the Gulf States. Columbus came to

The American colonists lived on a continent and England was an island. Thus the Americans wanted independence. Benjamin Franklin, [illegible] inventor of the [illegible], persuaded French King George III to help the U.S.A.

The French Revolution was like a tractor. It gave people the understanding that you need change in order to make tracks in the world. The Third Estate was locked out of its motel and had to do its business on a tennis court. Another problem was that France was full of French people. Revolters demanded liberty, equality and fraternities. Fraternity breeded pride in the nation and therefore thicker political boundaries. In 1799, Napoleon performed a coo. Napo- [illegible] all his life.

The [illegible] slow at first [illegible] progress was made through the introduction of self-acting [illegible]

munication went by mouth to mouth or telegram. The airplane was invented and first flown by the Marx brothers. The social structure was Upper Class, Middle Class, Working Class, and Lowest Poor Scum. Nobles claimed to be descended from better jeans. British paternalists were motivated by "noblesse oblique." Certain members of the lower middle class exhabited London pretensions. The slums became brooding grounds for lower class unrest.

In Russia, the Decembrists attempted a coup du jour. Mazzini was a conservative liberal socialist who founded a revolutionary group known as "Little Italy." Pope Leo XIII is known as the author of *Rectum Novarum*, a book of conservative ideas. Another man to influence the state and others was Karl Marx, who advanced diabolical materialism. His ideas about revolution, condos, and supermen intrigued many.

Prostitution, considered to be the world's oldest profession, got its beginnings in the nineteenth century. Sex in this period was a very quiet ordeal. Feminists argued that sex outside the family would make you go blind or lose your memory. Leaders of the women's movement included Florence Nightengail, Susan B. Anthony, and Crystal Pancake.

Burt Einstein developed the theory of relativism. Marie Curie won the Noel prize for inventing the radiator. Writers expressed themselves with cymbals. Cubism, splatterism, etc., became the rage.

Most English believed in the missionary position. Admiral Dewey sank the Spanish Armada in Vanilla Bay. The Russo-Japanese War exploded between Japan and Italy. The German takeover of All-Sauce Lorrain enraged the French, who clamored for vendetta. In 1914, the assignation of Archduke Ferdinand gave sweet relief to the mounting tensions.

When the Davy Jones Index crashed in 1929 many people were left to political incineration. Some, like John Paul Sart, retreated into extraterrestrialism. Hitler believed in a Panned Germany and therefore insisted that Czechoslovia release the Sedated Germans into his care. England's rulers vainly hoped for "peas in our time" but were completed toddled by Hitler. Lennon ruled in Russia. When he died, the U.S.S.R. was run by a five-man triumpherate—Stalin, Lenin, Trotsky, Menshevik, and Buchanan. Stalin expanded capitalism by building machine tractor stations. When things didn't go as planned, he used the peasants as escape goats.

Few were surprised when the National League failed to prevent another world war. The perverbial chickens laid by the poor peace treaties after World War I [illegible] Japan became Lord Hirohito the [illegible] U.S. Economy collapsing. The Allies landed near Italy's toe and gradually advanced [illegible] Stalin, Kerensky, Churchill and Franklin were drowned. The Big Three—Hitler, who had [illegible] Europe, Tojo, who [illegible] Asia, and Mussolini, who [illegible] wife Evita put [illegible] and then shot himself in the [illegible].

World War II became the Cold War, because Benjamin Franklin Roosevelt failed to trust Lenin and Stalin. An ironed curtain fell across the bottom half of Europe. Berlin was airlifted westward and Israel, a state-of-the-art [illegible] was founded despite the protests of local Arabs [illegible]. The Marshall Plan put Europe back together with help from Konrad Adenauer, a Jewish [illegible] efforts led to the creation of the European Common Market.

The British Empire has entered a state of decline. Its colonies have slowly fallen away, leaving only the odd speck on the map. Mohammed Gandhi, for example, was the last British ruler of India. In 1921 he [illegible] his western clothes and dawned a loincloth. This was a good way to get through to people. The French Empire, on the other hand, fell into total turmoil as they clutched painfully at remaining colonies in Argentina and the Far East.

South Africa followed "Apart Hide," a policy that separated people by [illegible]. Actually, the fall of empires has been a good thing, because it gives [illegible] people a chance to exploit their own people without outside interference.

The U.S.S.R. and U.S.A. became [illegible] powers, but Europe remained [illegible]. Wars fought in the 1950's and [illegible] include the Crimean War, Vietnamese War, the Six Minute War, [illegible]. Kennedy worked closely with the Egyptians to solve the Canadian Missile Crisis. Yugoslavia's Toto became a non-eventualist communist. Hechtse Minh [illegible] were active in Viet Nam. Castro led a coupe in Cuba and shocked [illegible] by [illegible] his leaders every time there was trouble in Latin America. This required the United States to middle in selected bandana republics during the 1960s. Mentally pedaling bicycles had to reinvent itself as [illegible] became top Russian after the death of Leoned Bolshevik.

The historicle period ended shortly after World War II. III. We, in all humidity, are the people of currant times. This concept grinds our critical, seething minds to a halt.

[Study Guide]

SEE DICK DEFENESTRATE JANE

Examples of exercises that appear in Word Smart II, *a book from the Princeton Review to help students prepare for standardized exams. In December, after receiving complaints about the violent nature of some of the sentences used to illustrate vocabulary words, the Princeton Review announced that it would recall the book, which has been in use since [illegible] exercises would be italicized.*

The *unstated* rule at our school is simple: no shooting at the teachers. If you have to shoot a gun, shoot it at a student or an administrator.

Living in New York for ten years has made Sally *circumspect* that to reach her mailbox she steps on the back of the homeless person who sleeps in the lobby of her apartment building.

Amanda felt that she was complimenting Lizzie when she told her that for a book it looked pretty good for a first attempt, but Lizzie took the comment as an affront.

The month we spent together in an isolated cabin *accorded* me the opportunity to get better acquainted with my abductor.

Billy *demurred* when I suggested that he run out into the middle of the railroad bridge and jump into the chasm just as a freight train was about to run over him.

I explored the use of cattle prods to discipline unruly Easter campers, and I intend to work toward their elimination.

Marty took a hammer and began hitting Suzanne over the head with it. Suzanne asked "What's this about?"

Sam's pulling a gun and pointing it at my head *disquieted* me, to say the least.

[illegible] me in front of everyone. The [illegible] impression that he had been up to no [illegible].

[illegible] me. Why [illegible] to the chrysanthemums.

[illegible] ever invited to the [illegible] annual [illegible] Uncle Sam, who rounded up several dozen townspeople and [illegible] them.

"Let's set fire to the town hall," Allie suggested [illegible].

The ceaseless *importuning* of her children finally drove Mary Elizabeth over the brink; she stuffed the entire brood into a canvas bag and pitched it over the railing of the bridge.

When his mother accidentally threw away Sheldon's slide rule, he flew into a *paroxysm* of rage, hurling a chair through the living-room window and setting the kitchen on fire.

We knocked over their snowman, and in *reprisal* they burned down our clubhouse.

In a flimsy effort to get Thomas off the hook, the defense lawyer *propounded* a preposterous scenario in which a gun thrown by someone on the street flew through the window, landed in Thomas's hand, and accidentally fired six times at Hannah as she scrambled frantically around the room while Thomas inadvertently shouted, "I'm really going to kill you now, you insufferable old curmudgeon."

[Interview]

ONLY DISCONNECT

From an unpublished telephone interview with V. S. Naipaul conducted on January 21 by Akash Kapur, a freelance journalist based in Oxford, England. Naipaul's most recent book is Between Father and Son: Family Letters.

[illegible]: Can you hear me?

V. S. NAIPAUL: Yes, I can hear you. Can you hear me?

KAPUR: Yes. Were you able to look at the questions?

NAIPAUL: Yes. Some of them we are going to skip.

[illegible]: Okay, that's fine. Just let me know—

NAIPAUL: If a man says, "I am walking down the street," you will say, "Why do you say you are walking down the street?" They have a quality of obviousness, you know?

KAPUR: Okay, let me know which ones you want to ignore.

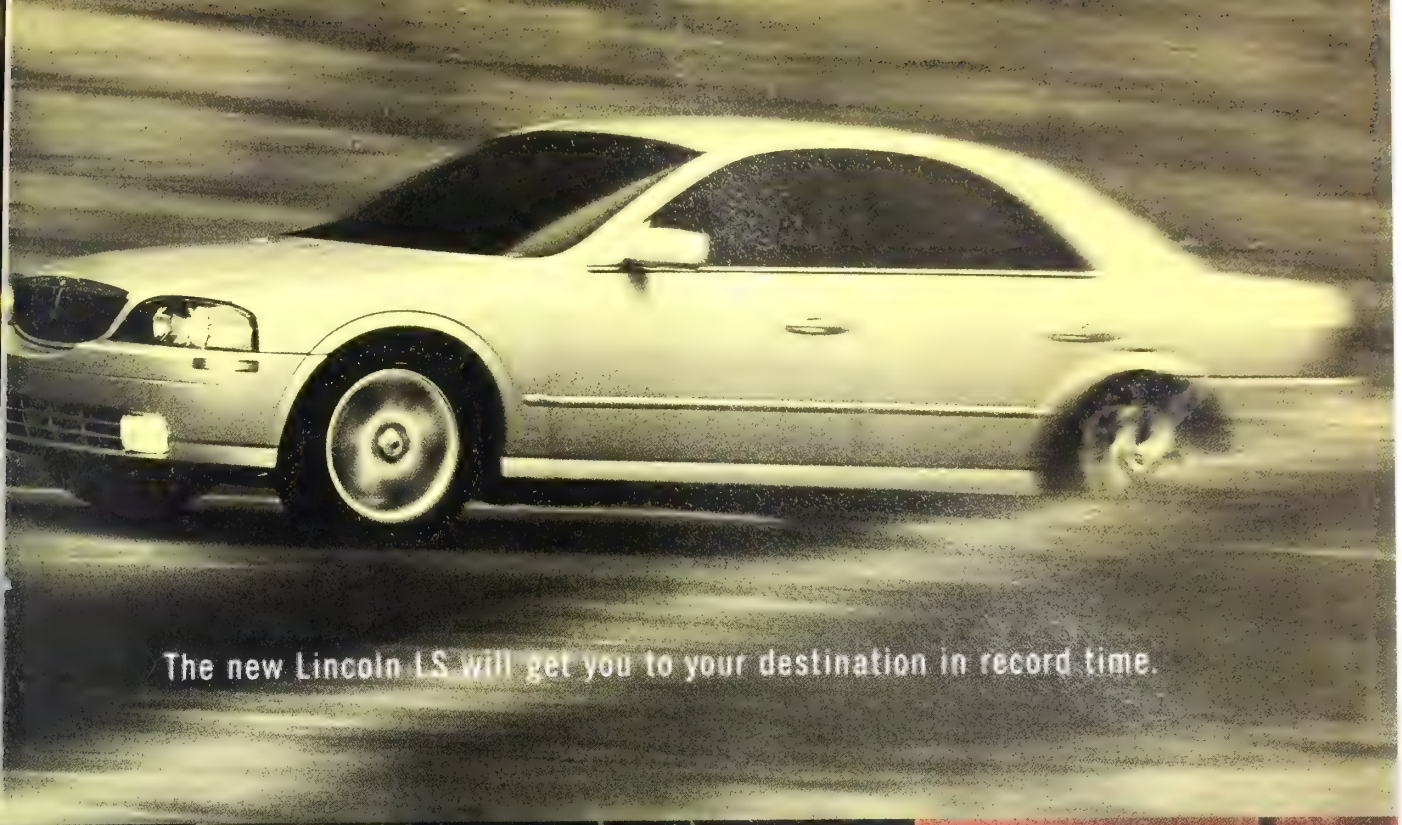
[illegible]: Yes.

[illegible]: Can we start with the first one?

[illegible]: No. I think we can ignore all these early ones. Yes. Because they really shouldn't be asked, the questions; the answers are all contained in what you've been reading. I can't [illegible].

[illegible]

NAIPAUL: I mustn't repeat my books. There'd [illegible].









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where and things like that. So I wish, in a

: Are you there? Can you hear me? All

: Repeat it again. Repeat the ques-

: Hello.

: Yes. Now tell me. Now tell me. What was the question?

CROSSING THE BIKINI LINE

Ingrid Newkirk, president of People for the Ethical

I am outraged by the most recent advertisement by PETA featuring a woman's unshaven panty line with the tag line "Fur Trim. Unattractive." This is a gratuitous and insulting image that makes its point at the expense of women.

It is ironic that PETA, an organization that seeks to counter mainstream notions about what makes women beautiful (i.e., wearing fur), would choose to do so with an image that reinforces oppressive beauty standards. This ad basically says that women's natural state is un- [illegible] point, as that is what women are told in one form or another by [illegible] accessories, and clothing. It also seems to a crash- [illegible] shock tactics [illegible] would to many.

Enough already! Why don't you try protect-





Eve River *by* Mary

ing ammo with the objective women. I think you'll not have the opportunity to be likely to demonstrate that you mind be inclined to support the mod[illegible]

Sincerely,

[illegible] Sherwin

Dear Ms. Sherwin:

I would like to [illegible] about our proposed

I would be opposed to [illegible] legs or underarms. Usually [illegible] ever wear a bikini [illegible] hours per day, all [illegible] been the only woman at the pool or the beach not to [illegible]

I [illegible] a whelming majority of women — not men, women — worry about [illegible] '60's style [illegible] hind, most people like the groomed look better [illegible]

[illegible] ought to [illegible] prefer Mountain Women [illegible] view [illegible] I [illegible] running the ads. They aren't for men. And [illegible] BVDs do you all pitch a fit or do the heterosexual staff linger over it? If you're a lesbian, subscribe [illegible] the harm in enjoying the scenery.

[illegible] ates an exploitative look? What about skirts? [illegible]

reflect society's concern for security, for their cause by showing their buttocks? Think of it: Dummy-count dummy? Please stop this [illegible] unnecessary rubbish. There are a lot [illegible] there [illegible] sometime [illegible] who don't appreciate being pol[illegible] than in a responsible way. We can use our [illegible] for pleasure, profit, and politics if we want. Please stop playing the role of an out-[illegible] father, brother, or boyfriend!'

Best wishes,
Brent Newkirk

[Essay]

ROMANCING THE PHONE

From a piece in the February issue of Mother Jones. *Frazier's most recent book is* [illegible].

Back [illegible] I was living by myself in an A-frame cabin in northwestern Montana. The cabin was a single high-ceilinged room, and at the center of the room, mounted on the roughhewn log that held up the ridgepole beam, was a telephone. I knew no one in the area or indeed the whole state, so my entire social life came to run through that phone. The woman I would marry was living in Sarasota, Florida, and the distance between us suggests how well we [illegible] at the time. We'd not been in touch for several months; she had no phone. One day she decided to call me from a pay phone. We talked for a while, and after her [illegible] I wrote the number on the wood beside my phone and called her back. A day or two later, thinking about the call, I wanted to call [illegible]. The only number I had for her was the pay-phone number I'd written down.

[illegible] phone booth [illegible] in the apartment where she stayed. A[illegible] happened, though, she had just stepped out to do some errands a few minutes before I called, [illegible] the pay phone [illegible] all when the phone rang. She [illegible] that [illegible] a public phone [illegible] [illegible] would be a big surprise, and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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I

I SING THE BODY DYSPEPTIC

We like sprouts and lettuce
Salami and stew
You'll find us on chicken, soft cheeses, fruit juices
and hamburgers too

We are the microbes, my friend
And we'll keep dividing
Till the end
We are the microbes
We are the microbes
No time for chlorine
'Cause we are the microbes
In your food

"Stayin' Alive"
(to the tune of "Stayin' Alive,"
by the Bee Gees)

Well you can tell by the way I choose my food
I'm a worried guy, in a cautious mood
Food safety scares, they're everywhere
And they're telling me I should beware
There's pesticides, Mad Cow Disease
Sure don't put my mind at ease
Biotech, and MSG
Messin' with my sanity

Don't want hepatitis or that gastroenteritis
I'm just stayin' alive, stayin' alive
Scrubbin' off my veggies and I'm heatin' all my burgers
Up to one-eighty-five, one-eighty-five
Ah, ha, ha, ha, stayin' alive, stayin' alive
Ah ha ha ha, stayin' alive

"They Might Kill You"
(to the tune of "We Will Rock You,"
by Queen)

Buddy you're a young man, dumb man, careless
And you're gonna make someone quite sick someday
You got spores on your plate
They'll incubate
There's trouble if you cross-contaminate

Microbes: they might kill you
Microbes: they might kill you

Toilin' with the fast food, bad mood, careless
It don't matter if those burgers stay pink inside
Servin' up a storm
With coliform
0157's deadly if it don't get warm

Microbes: they might kill you
Microbes: they might kill you

"U.S.D.A."
(to the tune of "Y.M.C.A.,"
by The Village People)

People, there's no need to despair
If you're worried 'bout your food, land, and air
I want to tell you, there are people who care
Here at the needy food bank happy

Every place you turn to
Where there's research on how to make crops grow
And some projects that put the grower's dough
Even when they don't plant nothing

It's fun to work with the U.S.D.A.
It's fun to work with the U.S.D.A.
They are everything
An agency can be
They look out for you and me

It's fun to work with the U.S.D.A.
It's fun to work with the U.S.D.A.
They are everything
An agency can be
They look out for you and me

[Policy]

MONSANTO'S FEEDING FRENZY

In a statement by Compass Food Services Limited that was posted last Friday in the cafeteria of the Monsanto Corporation's United Kingdom headquarters in High Wycombe, England, Monsanto is the world's leading producer of biotechnology and genetically modified foods. A subsidiary of Granada, operates Monsanto's cafeterias.

In response to concern raised by our customers over the use of genetically modified (GM) foods and to comply with government legislation, we have decided to remove, as far as is practicable, GM soy and maize from all food products served in our restaurant. We will continue to work with our suppliers to replace GM soy and maize with non-GM ingredients without impairing quality or performance.

To maintain customer choice, we will sell retail products, such as confectionery, that are packaged and labeled by the manufacturer as containing GM soy and maize, where appropriate.

We have taken the above steps to ensure that you, the customer, can feel confident in the food we serve.

Mike Batchelor
Quality Systems Director

made by ice and roaring current tearing off the

mostly plastic bags, caught in tree branches.

In the months after I moved, I was always

Wally and

the unlimited woods. We started on a sub-

out-the-jams gallops across mowed acres, lots of

the Old and Tangy) and, eventually, Whetstone

a couple of miles

upstream.

The river runs through Whetstone after a scary trip through a couple of suburban towns, through a dozen new developments and several

part of bustling shopping malls. Indeed, the determinant landform in Whetstone is emphatically suburban. Plastic bags dominate, festooning the trees in various colors, the worst of which is the sort of pinkish brown that some store chooses in pathetic attempt to imitate the

paper of the now-taboo question, "Paper or plastic?"

Plastic soft-drink bottles come next in sheer numbers. These things float best when people upriver put the cap back on before they're

out a car window, or perhaps not flung but only left beside a mountain parking lot, along with a meerschaum pile of cigarette butts from the emptied car ashtray. Their walls are thin, so plastic bottles aren't always the long-distance travelers you'd think. Cracks let water in and

The bottles don't end up often in trees, because trees are bright enough and smooth enough for the wind to find them. They are everywhere.

Then come plastic containers and come in two sorts: with and without wheels. Those with wheels are heavy, but float, so they end up high

and dry in trees. Those without wheels

soak up mulch and mud, and form strange, ring-shaped silt islands or, buried deeper,

Next are cups rather than trees. Like bumper stickers and bumper cars, eventually,

the water and slowly

Thanks to gravity and current, the car continues its work, and the car spreads downstream.

Aerosol containers make a strong showing in the river, those former dispensers of paint and freon and deodorant and foot spray and whipped cream. Indestructibly happy bobbers, these canisters are capable of long trips, clear

SONG OF THE OLENTANGY

I



Axel Erlandson's *Tree Project*

to the Cult of Mexico, I'm sure, and I belong in the category that I don't feel comfortable with. The Cult may be a high-minded crotchet and I'm their resident decadent, they may not tumble to it. Who knows? I'm a speed monitor here, in the part of the outside and the cultivated, in the media deep the seconds dive and resurface for air wherever the stream

Newspaper and other print matter turn up but happen not to be looking at the bleach into the water. A special category of printed matter that I might as well name is pornography, which I often find high and dry, the park being its entry point into the river *Image* was no exception. I happened upon some reading and that turned out to be some women naked. Their clothes were stripped neatly from their tall thighs, leaving the upper body [illegible] man, footprints and dribbles beneath, the whole gallery abandoned after the riparian onanist had done his work.

Other items [illegible]

long. Coolers predominate. Then chunks, which most come from packing materials. Then even bigger chunks, unrecognized on the Olentangy, of which nowhere else but the huge chunks found on the seacoast in Maine, parts of bigger things that no one knows what. And oh, tires, and lots of beach flotsam, boat parts are common, too, even on rivers, and even in the Olentangy. Fiberglass boards, not too big, or rowboat seats or, rarely, canoe prows. This is not a good river.

Now for the less tangible. There is the smell. It's not horrible, not even pervasive, but when the breeze is out of the river there's not only the usual river smell—mud and oxygen and hydrogen and fish and pungent organic rot—there's something else, one notch below healthy on the dial. My amateur analysis is as follows: equal parts motor oil, fertilizer, and straight human shit. Also shampoo and detergent, the faintest sickening edge of perfume. Which leads me to the foam, good bubbly stuff that can stack up to two or three feet high and is sometimes wishfully called "fish foam."

I eat lunch in a bakery before it gets to campus, and before it gets to the large skyscraper [illegible] Columbus. And Columbus is [illegible] than you think—in Emerald City [illegible] pops up on the prairie. It's the biggest city in Ohio, population about 1.25 million. The city's official slogan should be It's Not That Bad, since that's what people tell you, over and over. The Olentangy flows right through the Ohio State campus, unassaulted except by lawn chemicals and parking-lot runoff and frequent beer vomit on its way to the Scioto.

Columbus's two main rivers meet at Confluence Park. That is not really a park at all but a parking lot, with some kind of convention or catering facility on city land, probably the result of all kinds of inside deals. No park at all, just a steep, rocky, trash-strewn embankment forming a point of land where our two protagonist rivers mightily meet. Here the Olentangy gives up its name to the Scioto. Just below town the river pillows over a containment dam [illegible] and vicious. Not pretty. Not tall, really. And no dearth of trees to catch the trash after flood! Maple, ash, cherry, gum, walnut, oak, locust, sycamore—on and on, dominated thoroughly by cottonwoods, which in the spring leave a blanket of cottony seed para[illegible]

[illegible] I brought the dogs over to Lower Scioto for a [illegible] I had promised [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible]

[illegible] below the dam in the riverbank a broad and walkable in dry times—this first walk [illegible] autumn—and you can see trees, remnant of the last flood, forced into chunks of concrete under the Greenlawn Avenue bridge and rebar wire and, yes, examples of all the junk listed above, particularly those plastic grocery bags in the trees, but fifty-five-gallon drums as well, and broken lawn chairs used for comfort by fishermen and abandoned when beyond hope. Also some real dumping—an exploded couch, perhaps thrown off the high bridge, and some kind of switchboard with wires dangling and a filing cabinet with drawers labeled CONTRACTS, ABSTRACTS, ACCOUNTS PAYABLE, and [illegible]. And down there too is the large concrete bastion of a culvert, labeled with a sign [illegible]

After the bridge it's hard going, a rocky bank strewn with valueless trash but also bedding and clothes, particularly male underwear. It's not too pleasant and getting steep, so I turn back, but not before noting that across the river there is much parklike land, sandy soils under great canopy trees. Dog paradise. How to get there?

Wally and Desmond and I hike back to the car, drive over the Greenlawn Avenue bridge (it looks very different from above), and find the entrance to what is called Berliner Park. I am excited. There are baseball fields and a basketball dome and a paved bike path along the river and many footpaths to the water. The dogs race ahead.

Downstream a little farther there's another storm-sewer runoff warning and the vile smell of unadulterated, uncomposted shit. The bike path goes on. It's not a bad walk once you are past the stench, which takes a minute because it's where the septic tank pumping trucks unload. This stuff has a more composted reek, a little less septic, so there's no danger of puking or anything. The dogs run on, free of their leashes; they love nothing more than a good stink. The path ends at a six-lane highway spur-and-exit complex, but not before [illegible] dump and a wrecking yard, ten thousand or so crashed cars in piles. Also a funny kind of graveyard for things of the city: highway signs, streetlight poles, unused swimming rafts, traffic cones. It's not too inviting under the highway bridge; it's frightening, in fact, but if you keep going there's a fire ring and much soggy bedding, a bum stop, and, above you, up the bank and past a fence [illegible]

Here we (dogs, my wife, Juliet, myself) most [illegible] turn around and head back. I guess I'd be hard-pressed to convince anyone that it's not that bad walking here. The dogs love

it. It's a nice place under the crap. The trees are still trees. Up in those trees, the Carolina wrens are still Carolina wrens. And the wildflowers are still wildflowers, even if they grow from an old chest of drawers. And the piles of stumps are pretty cool to look at. And the great mounds of concrete from demolition projects, too, reminding me a little of Roman ruins. And the sky is still the sky, and the river flows by below with the perfection of eddies and boils and riffles and pools. And the herons are still herons, and squawk. And the sound of the highway is not so different from the sound of the wind (except for the screeching and honking and sputtering). And the lights of the concrete plant are like sunset. And the train whistle is truly plaintive and romantic, and the buildings of the city a mile upstream are like cliffs, and I've heard that peregrine falcons have been convinced to live there. And the earth is the earth, it is always the earth. And the sun is the sun and shines. And the stars are the stars, and the sliver of the waxing moon appears in the evening, stench or no, and moves me.

One fine blue day after much spring rain, Juliet and I joyfully take the dogs down to Berliner Park, oh, early spring, when the trees are still bare (but budded) and all the world is at its barest and ugliest, every flake of the forest floor, every fleck of litter and offal visible, and the turtles are not yet up from the mud.

We get out of the car next to a pile of litter someone has jettisoned from a car (Burger King gets a nod here, and Marlboro) and walk down the dike through old magazines and condoms to the dam to watch the high water of spring roaring over. In fact, the normal fifteen-foot plunge is now only two feet, and the water comes up clear to the platform where we normally stand high over the river to look and laps at our toes. There are boiling eddies and brown storms of water and the unbelievable force of all that water smoothly raging over the dam at twenty miles an hour. You would die fast in that water, not because it is so very cold but because of the supercomplex and violent pattern of flow.

Juliet and I stare through the high chain-link and barbed-wire fence into the boiling maelstrom, absorb the roar wholly, lose our edges to the cool breezes flung up and the lucky charge all around us of negative ions as molecules are battered apart by this greatest force of nature: water unleashed. It's a moment before we see the flotsam trap, where an eddy returns anything that floats—anything—back to the dam and the blast of the falling river. And the falling river forms a clean foaming cut the length of the dam, a sharp line, a chasm, the river falls behind and [illegible] itself. Great logs are [illegible] whole tree trunks, forty feet [illegible] clean of bark and branches [illegible] roots or more, dive and roll [illegible] gear, then pop into the [illegible] whales sounding, float peacefully to the [illegible] water, which spins them lengthwise [illegible] sinks them instantly, and disappear only to appear twenty feet downriver, sounding again, all but spouting, roaring up out of the water, ten, fifteen feet into the sky, only to fall [illegible] Humpback whales they are, slapping and parting the water, floating purposefully again to the dam. It's an astonishing sight, objects so big under such thorough control and in such graceful movement, trees that in life only swayed and finally, after a century or two of wind and bare winters, fell at river's edge.

And then I see the balls. At least five basketballs and many softballs and two soccer balls and ten dark-pink-and-stippled playground balls and forty smaller balls of all colors and sizes, all of them bobbing up to the wall of water, rolling, then going under, accompanied by pop bottles of many hues and Styrofoam pieces and aerosol cans, polished. And a car tire with wheel, floating flat. This old roller hits the wall of water and bounces away slightly, floats back, bounces away, floats back, bounces away, floats back, is caught, disappears. Even the dogs love watching.

The tire reappears long seconds after its immersion, many yards away, cresting like a dolphin. Logs pop out of the water like titanic fishes, diving at the dam head-up the way salmon do, leaping among froth and playground balls and tires and bottles with caps on, balls and bottles and tires ajumble, reds and blues and yellows and pinks and purples and greens and blacks, bottles and aerosol cans and balls, balls and tires and logs and tree trunks and chunks of Styrofoam, all leaping and feinting and diving under and popping up and reappearing in colors not of the river: aquas and fuschias and metallics, WD-40 blue and Right Guard gold and polished wood and black of tire and crimson board and child's green ball and pummeled log and white seagulls hovering, flaring for fish brought to the tortured surface in the chaos of trash and logs and toys, all of it bobbing, the logs diving headfirst at the dam, the balls rolling and popping free of the foam for airborne flights and tires like dolphins and softballs fired from the foam and polished logs and a baby-doll body, all of it rumbling, caught in the dam wash for hours, days, nights of flood, rumbling and tumbling and popping free, rolling and diving and popping free, bubbling and plunging and popping free.



The Fall

By Jonathan Franzen

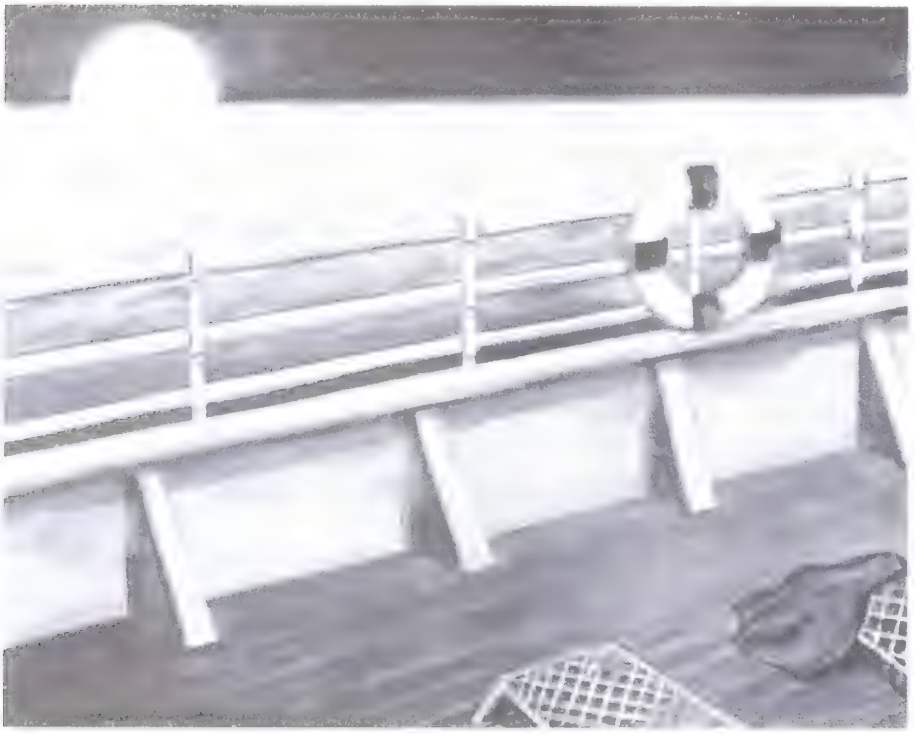


Two hundred hours, darkness, the *Gunnar Myrdal*: all around the old man, running water sang mysteriously in metal pipes. As the ship sliced open the black sea east of Nova Scotia, the horizontal faintly pitched, bow to stern, as if despite its great steel competence the ship were uneasy and could solve the problem of the pitch only by cutting through it quickly; as if its stability depended on such a glossing-over of flotation's terrors. There was another world below—this was the problem. Another world below, which had volume but no form. By day the sea was blue surface and whitecaps, a realistic navigational challenge, and the problem could be overlooked. By night, though, the mind went forth and lost itself through the yielding—the violently lonely—nothingness on which the heavy steel ship traveled, and in every movement of your eyes across the grids, you saw how truly and forever lost a man would be six fathoms under. Dry land had the z-axis. Dry land was like being awake. Even in chartless desert you could drop to your knees and pound land with your fist and land didn't give. Of course the ocean too had rocks and islands. But every point on this skin was a point that could sink and by sinking disappear.

Nothing pinched—the motion. There was a shivering in the *Gunnar Myrdal*'s framework, an endless shudder in the floor and bed and birch paneled walls. A syncopated tremor so fundamental to the ship [illegible] in the way it constantly waxed without seeming

cruise time were drinking the frozen cocktail du jour, a Lingonberry Lapp Frappe, from schooners that took two hands to handle safely. Others crowded the rails of lower decks and scanned Manhattan for a face to wave good-bye to.

While Alfred had a final preshower session in the bathroom, Enid sat in the "B" Deck lounge and listened to the slow plant-and-drag of someone's walker-aided progress across the "A" Deck lounge above her. Apparently the Duplicate League's cruise uniform was a T-shirt with the



bear heavy repetition.

"Of course," she murmured, reflecting on how old everyone was, "I suppose who else could af-

The [illegible] that [illegible] pulling by a leash turned out to be a tank of oxygen mounted on roller-skate wheels and dressed in a pet sweater bearing the logo of Priceline.com.

A very fat man walked by in a T-shirt that said

You'd spent a lifetime being waited for impatiently and now your impatient husband's minimum stay in a bathroom was fifteen minutes.

On nights with a casual dress code, Nordic Pleasurelines officially discouraged T-shirts in the dining room. Enid had put on a wool suit and asked Alfred to wear a tie. She had an acute mid-western awareness that Nordic Pleasurelines was [illegible]. She expected—and had paid for—elegance. Each T-shirt she saw was a specific small trampling of her fantasy and, hence, pleasure.

It rankled her that people richer than she were so often less worthy and attractive. More slobbish and louty. Comfort could be found in being poorer than people who were smart and beautiful. But to be less affluent than these T-shirted, joke-cracking fatsos—

"I am ready," Alfred announced, appearing in the lounge. He took Enid's hand for the ascent by elevator to the Søren Kierkegaard Dining Room. Holding his hand she felt married and, to that extent, grounded in the universe and reconciled to old age, but she couldn't help thinking how dearly she would have treasured holding his hand in the decades when he'd stridden everywhere a pace or two ahead of her. His hand was needy and subdued now. Even tremors of his that looked violent proved to be featherweight in feel. She could sense the hand's readiness to resume its paddling as soon as it was released, however.

Such travelers as were cruising without affiliation had been assigned to special dining tables for "floaters." To the delight of Enid, who relished cosmopolitan company provided it wasn't too snobbish, two of the "floaters" at her and Alfred's table were from Norway and two were from Sweden. Enid liked European countries small. One could learn an interesting Swedish custom or Norwegian fact without being made sensible of one's ignorance of German music, French literature, or Italian art. The usage of "skoal" was a good example. Likewise the fact that Norway was Europe's largest exporter of crude oil, as Mr. and Mrs. Nygren from Oslo were informing the table when the Lamberts claimed the last two seats.

Enid spoke first to her left-hand neighbor, Mr. Soderblad, a reassuringly ascoted and blue-blazered older Swede. "What's your impression of the ship so far?" she asked. "Is it really super authentic?"

"Well, it does seem to be floating," Mr. Soderblad said with a smile, "in spite of heavy seas."

Enid raised her voice to aid his comprehension. "I mean, is it AUTHENTICALLY SCANDINAVIAN?"

"Well, yes, of course," Mr. Soderblad said. "At he same time, everything in the world is more nd more American, don't you think?"

"But you think this captures REALLY SUPER /ELL," Enid said, "the flavor of a REAL SCAN-)INAVIAN SHIP?"

"Actually, it is better than most ships in Scandinavia. My wife and I are quite pleased so far."

Enid abandoned her inquiry unconvinced that Mr. Soderblad had grasped its import. It mattered to her that Europe be European. She'd visited the Continent five times on vacation and twice on business trips with Alfred, so about a dozen times altogether, and to friends planning tours of Spain or France she now liked to say, with a sigh, that she'd had her fill of the place. It drove her crazy, however, to hear her wealthier neighbors, the ones who'd invested in growth funds while Alfred left his savings in flat-rate annuities, affect the same indifference: "I'm so sick of flying to St. Moritz for my grandsons' birthdays," et cetera.

"My best friend in St. Jude vacations at St. Moritz," she shouted, apropos essentially of nothing, in the direction of Mr. Soderblad's pretty wife. "Her Austrian son-in-law is tremendously successful and owns a chalet there!"

Mrs. Soderblad was like a precious-metal accessory somewhat scuffed and tarnished by Mr. Soderblad's use. Her lip gloss, hair color, eye shadow, and nail polish rang changes on a theme of platinum; her dinner dress was of silver lamé and afforded good views of sun-toasted shoulder and silicone augmentation. "St. Moritz is quite beautiful," she said. "I have performed many times in St. Moritz."

"YOU'RE A PERFORMER?" Enid shouted.

"Signe was a special entertainer," Mr. Soderblad said hastily.

"Those Alpine resorts can be terribly overpriced," the Norwegian woman, Mrs. Nygren, observed with a shiver. She had large round eyeglasses and a radial distribution of face wrinkles that together gave a mantislike impression. Visually she and the burnished Soderblad were mutual affronts. "On the other hand," she continued, "it is easy for us in Norway to be choosy. Even in certain of our city parks the skiing can be 'top-notch.' There is really nothing like it anywhere."

"Of course a distinction must be made," said Mr. Nygren, who was very tall and had ears like raw veal chops, "between the alpine type of skiing and the cross-country, or nordic, variety. Norway has produced outstanding alpine skiers—I mention the name Kjetil Andre Aamodt with some confidence that it will 'ring a bell'—but it must be

top level in this area. However, the cross-country,

than [illegible]

"Norwegians are fantastically boring," Mr. Soderblad said hoarsely in Enid's ear.

The [illegible] some of [illegible] Ford, P[illegible] tive favor of engaging Alfred in conversation. Alfred's face was flushed with soup heat, the drama of a spoon, and also perhaps with the effort of [illegible] zling Soderbladian décolletage, while he explained to the Roths the mechanics of stabilizing an ocean liner. Mr. Roth, a brainy-looking man in a bow tie and eye-bloating horn-rims, was peppering him with discerning questions and assimilating the answers so raptly he appeared almost shocked.

Mrs. Roth was paying less attention to Alfred than to Enid. Mrs. Roth was a small woman, a handsome child in her mid-sixties. Her elbows barely cleared the tabletop. She had a white-flecked black pageboy and rosy cheeks and big

You'd spent a lifetime being waited for impatiently and now your impatient husband's minimum stay in a bathroom was fifteen minutes

Blue eyes with which [illegible] abashedly, in the way of someone very smart or very stupid. Such a crushlike intensity of looking suggested hunger. Enid sensed immediately that Mrs. Roth [illegible] cruise, or else her great rival, and so with something like coquetry she declined to speak to her or otherwise acknowledge her attention. As steaks were brought to the table and [illegible] sters taken away [illegible] Soderblad repeatedly parried questions concerning his occupation, which appeared to involve the arms trade. She soaked up Mrs. Roth's blue-eyed gaze along with the envy that she imagined the "floaters" were provoking at other tables. She supposed that to the hoi polloi in their T-shirts the "floaters" looked extremely Continental. A touch of distinction here. Beauty, neckties, an [illegible]

Enid's hopes that Alfred might take her dancing in the [illegible] dashed when, at seven o'clock, he stood up and [illegible]

"[illegible]" she said. "The [illegible]"

Alfred's unsightly napkin fell from his thighs to the floor. He seemed to have no inkling of how much he [illegible] and disappointing her. "You stay," he said. "I've had enough."

And away across the Søren Kierkegaard broadloom he lurched, battling shifts in the horizontal that had grown more pronounced since the [illegible].

Familiar waves of sorrow for all the fun she [illegible] husband dumped [illegible] put until it occurred to her that she now had a long evening to herself and no Alfred to spoil her fun.

Hearing of other people's disappointing children—their squalid divorces, their substance abuse, their foolish investments—made her feel better

She [illegible] and brightened further when Mr. Roth departed for the Knut Hamsun Reading Room, leaving his wife at the table. Mrs. Roth switched seats to be closer to Enid.

"We Norwegians are great readers," Mrs. Nygren took the opportunity to remark.

"And great yakkers," Mr. Soderblad muttered.

"Public libraries and bookstores in Oslo are thriving," Mrs. Nygren informed the table. "I think it is not the same elsewhere. Reading is mostly in decline around the world. But not in Norway, h'm. My Per is reading the complete [illegible] autumn. In English."

"Nooo, Inga, nooo," Per Nygren whinnied. "[illegible]"

"My God," said Mr. Soderblad.

"It's true." Mrs. Nygren looked at Enid and Mrs. Roth as though anticipating awe. "Each year Per reads one work by every winner of the [illegible] works of his favorite winner from his previous year's reading. And you see, each year the task be[illegible]"

"It's [illegible]" Per explained. "Every year a bit more challenging."

Mr. Soderblad, who by Enid's count was drinking his eighth cup of coffee, leaned close to her [illegible]

"[illegible] into Henrik Pontoppidan than most," Per Nygren said.

Mrs. Soderblad tilted her head, smiling dreamily. "Do you know," she said, perhaps to Enid or to Mrs. Roth, "that until one hundred years ago Norway was a colony of Sweden?"

The Norwegians erupted like a batted hive.

"Colony!" "Colony!"

"Signe," Mr. Soderblad observed wickedly to his wife, "I do believe you've hit a nerve." He raised a hand. "Waiter, refill."

"If one chooses as a vantage point the late ninth century," Per Nygren said, "and I suspect that even our Swedish friends will concede that the ascension of Harald the Blond is quite a reasonable 'hopping-off place' for our examination of the seesaw relationship of two great rival powers, or should I perhaps say three great powers, since Denmark as well plays a rather fascinating role in our story—"

"We'd love to hear it, but maybe another time," Mrs. Roth interrupted, leaning over to touch Enid's hand. "Remember we said seven o'clock?"

Enid was only briefly bewildered. She excused herself and followed Mrs. Roth into the main hall, where they encountered a crush of seniors and a lingering bathroom smell, as in a nursery school. Also gastric aromas, disinfectant aromas.

"Enid, I'm Sylvia," said Mrs. Roth. "How do you feel about slot machines? I've had a physical craving all day."

"Oh, me too!" Enid said. "I think they're in the Stringbird Room."

"Strindberg, yes."

Enid admired quickness of mind but seldom credited herself with possessing it. "Thanks for the—you know," she said as she followed Sylvia Roth through the crush.

"Rescue. Don't mention it."

The Strindberg Room was packed with kibitzers, low-stakes blackjack players, and lovers of the slot. Enid couldn't remember when she'd had so much fun. The fifth quarter she dropped brought her three plums; as if so much fruit upset the bowels of her machine, specie gushed from its nether parts. She shoveled her take into a plastic bucket. Eleven quarters later it happened again: three cherries, a silver dump. White-haired players losing steadily at neighboring machines gave her dirty looks. I'm embarrassed, she told herself, although she wasn't.

Decades of insufficient affluence had made her a disciplined investor. From her winnings she set aside the amount of her initial investment. Half of every payoff she also salted away.

Her playing fund showed no sign of exhaustion, however.

"So, I've had my fix," Sylvia Roth said after early an hour, tapping Enid on the shoulder. Shall we go hear the string quartet?"

"Yes! Yes! It's in the Greed Room."

"Grieg," said Sylvia, laughing.

"Oh, that is funny, isn't it? Grieg. I'm so stupid night."

"How much did you make? You seemed to be oing well."

"I'm not sure, I didn't count."

Sylvia smiled at her intently. "I think you did, hough. I think you counted exactly."

"All right," Enid said, blushing because she vas liking Sylvia so much. "It was a hundred hirty dollars."

A portrait of Edvard Grieg hung in a room f actual gilt ornateness that recalled the ighteenth-century splendor of Sweden's royal court. The large number of empty chairs confirmed Enid's suspicion that many of the cruise participants were low-class. She'd been on cruises where the classical concerts were SRO.

Although Sylvia seemed less than knocked dead by the musicians, Enid thought they were wonderful. They played, *from memory*, popular classical tunes such as "Swedish Rhapsody" and excerpts from "Finlandia" and "Peer Gynt." At the elegant reception afterward Enid spent 7.7 percent of her gambling earnings on a cassette tape recorded by the quartet. She tried a complimentary glass of Spögg, a Swedish liqueur currently enjoying a $15 million marketing campaign. Spögg tasted like vodka, sugar, and horseradish, which in fact were its ingredients. As their fellow guests reacted to Spögg with looks of surprise and reproach, Enid and Sylvia fell to giggling.

"Special treat," Sylvia said. "Complimentary Spögg. Try some!"

"Yum!" Enid said in stitches, snorting for air. "Spogg!"

Then it was on to the Ibsen Promenade for the scheduled ten o'clock ice cream social. In the elevator it seemed to Enid that the ship was suffering not only from a seesaw motion but also from a yaw, as if its bow were the face of someone experiencing repugnance. Leaving the elevator, she almost fell over a man on his hands and knees like half a two-man prank involving shoving. On the back of his T-shirt was a punch line: THEY'LL STILL LOSE THEIR AIM.

Enid accepted an ice cream soda from a food handler in a toque. It was her habit, when she sensed that family was not a person's favorite topic, to probe the sore relentlessly. By her private sense of ethics this was only fair, because her own family was probably her least favorite topic in the world, and misery certainly did love company. She would sooner have died than admit that her children disappointed her, but hearing of other people's disappointing children [illegible] one in medicine and the other in computers, and both were [illegible] upstairs and have a nightcap."

Enid's [illegible] morning, but she never declined an attractive invitation. Upstairs in the Lagerkvist Tap Room she and Sylvia were [illegible] helmet and leather jerkin who persuaded them to order cloudberry aquavit.

"I want to tell you something," Sylvia said, "because I have to tell someone on the ship, but you can't breathe a word of this to anyone. Are you good at keeping secrets?"

"It's one thing I do well."

"Then good," Sylvia said. "A week from today there's going to be [illegible] nia. So, and the following day, a week from tomorrow, is Ted and my fortieth anniversary. And if you ask Ted, he'll tell you that's why we're on this cruise, for the anniversary. He'll tell you that, but it's not the truth. [illegible] and not me."

Enid felt afraid.

"The man who's being executed," Sylvia Roth said, "killed our daughter."

"No," Enid said.

The blue clarity of Sylvia's gaze made her seem a beautiful, lovable animal that was not, however, quite human. "[illegible] cruise because we have a problem with this execution. We have [illegible]"

"No! What are you telling me?" Enid shuddered. "Oh, I can't stand to hear this! I can't stand to hear this."

Sylvia quietly registered this allergy to her disclosure. "I'm sorry," she said. "It's not fair of me to ambush you. Maybe we should call it a night."

But Enid quickly regained her composure. She was determined not to miss becoming Sylvia's confidante. "Tell me everything you need to tell me," she said. "And I'll listen." She folded her hands in her lap. [illegible] I'm listening."

"Then the other thing I have to tell you," Sylvia said, "is that I'm a gun artist. I draw guns. You really want to hear this?"

"Yes." Enid nodded eagerly and vaguely. "Interesting."

For many years, Sylvia said, she'd been an amateur printmaker. She had a sun-filled studio in her house in Chadds Ford, she had a cream-smooth lithography stone and a twenty-pi[illegible]

to a Wilmington art guild in whose semiannual show, while her youngest child, Jordan, grew from a tomboy into an independent young woman, she'd sold decorative prints for prices like forty dollars. Then Jordan was murdered, and for five years Sylvia printed, drew, and painted nothing but guns. Year after year only guns.

"Terrible, terrible," Enid said with open disapproval.

The trunk of the wind-splintered tulip tree outside Sylvia's studio suggested stocks and barrels. Every human form sought to become a hammer, a trigger guard, a cylinder, a grip. There was no abstraction that couldn't be tracer fire, or the smoke of black powder, or a hollow-point's flowering. The body was worldlike in the repleteness of its possibilities, and just as no part of this little world was safe from a bullet's penetration, no [illegible] world had no echo in a gun. Even a pinto bean was like a derringer, even a snowflake like a Browning on its tripod. Sylvia wasn't insane; she could force herself to draw a circle or sketch [illegible]. But what she hungered to draw was firearms. Guns, gunfire, ordnance, projectiles. She spent hours capturing in pencil the pattern of gleam on nickel plating. Sometimes she also drew her hands and her wrists and forearms in what she guessed (for she had never held a gun) were appropriate grips for a .50 caliber Desert Eagle, a 9-millimeter Glock, a fully automatic M-16 with a folding aluminum stock, and other exotic weapons from the catalogues that she kept in brown envelopes in her sun-drenched studio. She abandoned herself to her habit like a lost soul to its hellishly fitting occupation (although Chadds Ford, the subtle warblers that ventured up from the Brandywine, the scents of warm cattail and fermenting persimmon that October winds stirred out of nearby hollows, staunchly resisted being made a hell of); she was a Sisypha who every night destroyed her own creations—tore them up, erased them in mineral spirits. Kindled [illegible] from the [illegible].

"Terrible," Enid murmured again. "I can't think of a worse thing that could happen to a mother." She signaled to the dwarf for more cloudberry aquavit.

Some mysteries of her obsession, Sylvia said, were that she'd been raised as a Quaker and still [illegible] that the tools of Jordan's torture and murder had been one roll of nylon-reinforced "strapping" tape, one dish towel, two wire coat hangers, one General Electric Light 'n Easy electric iron, and one Sabatier twelve-inch serrated bread knife from Williams-[illegible] nineteen-year-old named Khellye Withers, had [illegible] (and again) a gun being unholstered; that with a husband who earned a huge late-career salary as DuPont's vice president of compliance, and a sport-utility vehicle so massive that a head-on crash with a VW Cabriolet might hardly have dented it, and a six-bedroom Queen Anne–style house into whose kitchen and pantry Jordan's entire Philadelphia apartment would have fit comfortably, Sylvia enjoyed a life of almost senseless ease and comfort in which her only task besides cooking for Ted, literally her only task, was to recover from Jordan's death; that she nevertheless often became so absorbed in rendering the tooling on a revolver butt or the veins in her arm that she had to drive crazily fast to avoid missing her thrice-weekly therapy with an M.D./Ph.D. in Wilmington; that by talking to the M.D./Ph.D., and by attending Wednesday-night sessions with other Parents of Victims of Violence and Thursday-night meetings with her Older Women's group, and by reading the poetry and novels and memoirs and insight books that her friends recommended, and by relaxing with yoga and horseback riding, and by volunteering as a physical therapist's assistant at Children's Hospital, she succeeded in working through her grief even as her compulsion to draw guns intensified; that she mentioned this compulsion to no one, not even to the M.D./Ph.D. in Wilmington; that her friends and advisers all constantly exhorted her to "heal" herself through her "art"; that by "art" they meant her decorative woodcuts and lithos; that she was convinced that Jordan, despite having earned a B.F.A. in painting and an M.A. in art therapy and despite the encouragement and paid instruction in art she'd received for twenty years, had not been a good artist; that after achieving this objective view of her dead daughter she continued to draw guns and ammo; and that in spite of the rage and thirst for vengeance that her continuing obsession obviously betokened she had never once in five years drawn the face of Khellye Withers.

On the October morning when these mysteries impressed themselves on her en masse, Sylvia took the stairs to her studio after breakfast at a run. On a sheet of ivory Canson paper, and using a mirror so that it appeared to be her right hand, she drew her left hand with its thumb raised and fingers curled, sixty degrees behind full profile, a nearly full rear view. This hand she then filled with a snub-nosed .38 revolver, expertly foreshortened, whose barrel penetrated a pair of smirking lips above which she penciled accurately, from memory, the taunting eyes of Khellye Withers, [illegible] over the recent exhaustion of whose legal appeals few tears had been shed. And at that—a pair of lips, a pair of eyes—Sylvia had set down her pencil.

"It was time to move on," Sylvia said to Enid. "I swear it just struck me. That whether I liked it or not, the survivor and the artist was me, not her.

e're all conditioned to think our childhoods are more important than us, you know, and to live vicariously through them. All of a sudden I was sick of that kind of thinking. I may be dead tomorrow, I said to myself, but I'm alive now. And I can live liberately. I've paid the price, I've done the work, and I have nothing to be ashamed of.

"And when the event, the big chance in your life, is simply an insight—isn't that a strange thing? That absolutely nothing changes except that you see things differently, and you're less fearful and less anxious and generally stronger as a result: isn't it amazing that a completely invisible thing in your head can feel realer than anything you've experienced before? You see things more clearly and you *know* that you're seeing them more clearly. And it comes to you that this is what it means to love life, this is all anybody who talks seriously about God is ever talking about. Moments like this."

"Maybe one more?" Enid said to the dwarf, raising her glass. She was almost wholly not listening to Sylvia, but shaking her head and murmuring "Uh!" and "Oh!" while her consciousness stumbled through clouds of alcohol into such absurd realms of speculation as how the dwarf might feel against her hips and belly, embracing her. Sylvia turned out to be *very* intellectual, and Enid felt befriended under somewhat false pretenses, but while not listening she also had to listen, because she was missing certain key facts, such as whether Khellye Withers was black and whether Jordan had been brutally raped.

From her studio Sylvia had gone straight to a Wawa Food Market and bought one of every dirty magazine it had in stock. Nothing she found in the magazines was sufficiently hard-core, however. She needed to see the actual plumbing, the literal act. She returned to Chadds Ford and switched on the computer that her younger son had given her to foster closeness in their time of loss. Her e-mail box contained a month's backlog of filial greetings that she ignored. In less than five minutes she located the goods she wanted—all it took was a credit card—and she moused through thumbnail views until she found the necessary angle on the necessary act with the necessary actors: black man performing oral sex on white man, camera shooting over left hip sixty degrees behind full profile, crescent of high values curving over buttock, knuckles of black fingers duskily visible in their probing on the dark side of this moon. She downloaded the image and viewed it at high resolution.

She was sixty-five years old and she'd never seen such a scene. She'd fashioned images all her life and she'd never appreciated their mystery.

A population glued to screens and magazines.

She wondered: How could people respond to these [illegible] fakes—[illegible] the same [illegible] that [illegible] so powerful [illegible] could be vivid, certainly, in its weakness, as on days when [illegible] and the valley smelled like cider, and on cold nights when Jordan had driven to Chadds Ford for dinner [illegible] crunched on the gravel driveway; but the world was fungible only as images. Nothing got inside the head without [illegible]

And yet Sylvia was struck by the contrast between the online porn and her unfinished drawing of Withers. Sex happened in the head; genitals didn't much care if they were stimulated by pictures

Sylvia wasn't insane, but what she hungered to draw was firearms. A .50 caliber Desert Eagle, a 9 millimeter Glock, a fully automatic M-16

or another person or pure imagination. The lust for revenge, however, could not be tricked. The most graphic image couldn't satisfy it. This lust required the death of a specific individual, the termination of a specific history. Like the menus said, STITUTIONS. She could draw her desire but not its fulfillment. And so she finally told herself the truth: she wanted Khellye Withers dead

She wrote [illegible] view with the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in which she'd avowed that killing someone else's child would [illegible] dead despite the religious fervor with which her M.D./Ph.D. had forbidden her to interpret Jordan's death religiously—for example, as a divine judgment on her own liberal politics or liberal parenting or senseless affluence. She wanted him dead despite believing that Jordan's death had been a random tragedy and that redemption lay not in vengeance but in reducing the incidence of random tragedies nationwide. She wanted him dead despite imagining a society that provided jobs at a decent wage for young men like him (so that he would not have had to bind the wrists and ankles of his former art therapist and bully out of her the passwords for her bank card and [illegible] and to [illegible] illegal drugs into urban neighborhoods (so that With

crack, and would have had more mental clarity when he returned to the apartment of his former art therapist, and would not have proceeded to [illegible] (and [illegible] and [illegible] thirty hours), a society in which young men had more to believe in than brand-name consumer goods (so that Withers would have fixated less insanely on [illegible] therapist's [illegible], and would have believed her when she insisted she'd lent [illegible] for the weekend, and would have set less store by her possession of two sets of keys ["Couldn't get around that," he explained in his partially coerced but still legally admissible confession, "all the keys right there on the kitchen table, you know what I'm saying? Couldn't get my ass around that fact"], and would not have repeatedly applied the victim's Light 'n Easy iron to her bare skin and advanced the temperature setting from [illegible] through Cotton/Linen while demanding to know where she'd parked the Cabri[illegible] and [illegible] her throat in a panic when her friend came by on Sunday evening to [illegible] and [illegible] that set of keys), a society that [illegible] all put an end to the physical [illegible] that it would have been absurd for a convicted murderer to claim, in the [illegible] phase of his trial, that his stepfather had burned him with an electric iron when he was little—though in the case of Withers, who had no burn scars to exhibit, such testimony seemed mainly to underscore the convict's own lack of imagination as a liar). She wanted him dead despite even her realization, in therapy, that his smirk had been a protective mask donned by a lonely boy surrounded by people who hated him, and that if she'd only smiled at him like a forgiving [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] his mask and wept with honest remorse. She wanted him dead despite knowing her desire would please conser[illegible] and that the [illegible] personal responsibility" constituted permission to ignore social injustice. She wanted him dead despite being unable, [illegible] [illegible] to control the [illegible] and [illegible] that [illegible] which [illegible] and [illegible].

[illegible] this [illegible], why we're on this cruise."

"No. We're here because Ted won't admit that Jordan was murdered."

"Is he—?"

"Oh, he knows it," Sylvia said. "He just won't talk about it. He was very close to Jordan, closer in a lot of ways than he's ever been to me. And he grieved, I'll grant him that. He wept so much he could hardly move. But then one morning he was over it. He said Jordan was gone and he wasn't going to live in the past. He said that starting on Labor Day he was going to forget she was a victim. And every day, as it got later in August, he reminded me that beginning after Labor Day he wouldn't admit that she was murdered. Ted's a very rational man. His view was that human beings have been losing children forever and that too much grieving is stupid and self-indulgent. He didn't care what happened to Withers, either. He said that following the trial was just another way of not getting over the murder.

"And so, on Labor Day, he said to me, 'It may seem strange to you, but I will never speak of her death again, and I want you to remember that I'm telling you this. Will you remember this, Sylvia? So you don't think I'm crazy later?' And I said, 'I don't like this, Ted, I don't accept this.' And he said he was sorry but he had to do it. And the next night when he got home from work I told him, I think it was, that Withers's lawyer was claiming his confession was coerced and the real killer was still at large. And Ted sort of grinned at me, in this way when he's pulling your leg, and he said, 'I don't know what you're talking about.' And so I actually said, 'I'm talking about the person who killed our daughter.' And he said, 'No one killed our daughter, I don't want to hear you say that again.' And I said, 'Ted, this is not going to work.' And he said, 'What's not going to work?' And I said, 'Your pretending Jordan isn't dead.' And he said, 'We had a daughter and we don't now and so I guess she's dead, but I'm warning you, Sylvia, you do not tell me she was killed, do you understand me?' And ever since then, Enid, no matter how hard I push, he's never dropped his pose. And I'll tell you, I'm an inch away from divorcing him. Always. Except he's so unfailingly dear to me otherwise. He never gets angry when I talk about Withers, he just gets bluff and laughs it off, like it's some peculiar *idée fixe* of mine. And I can see that he's like our cat dragging in a dead warbler. The *cat* doesn't know you don't like dead warblers. Ted wants me to be rational like he is, he thinks he's doing me a favor, and he takes me on all these trips and cruises, and everything's fine except that for him the most terrible thing in our life didn't happen and for me it did."

"He takes me on all these trips and cruises," she said, "and everything's fine except that for him the most terrible thing in our life never happened"

"So did it happen?" Enid said.

Sylvia drew her head back, shocked. "Thank
u," she said, [illegible]
n because she was completely confused, too
ecause she wanted to [illegible]
on, for I [illegible]
nonely to act normal
) feel crazy sometimes.
ll my work is in my
ead. I'm moving around
million little pieces
t nothing. I [illegible]
houghts and feelings and
emories inside my head,
ay after day, for years,
ere's this enormous
ilding and planning, like
n building a cathedral
f toothpicks inside my
ead. And it doesn't even
elp to keep a diary, be-
ause I can't make the
ords on the page have
ny effect on my brain. As
oon as I write a thing
lown I leave it behind. It's
ike dropping pennies over
he side of a boat. And so
'm doing all this mental
work without any possi-
ility of external support,
except for these slightly
dowdy people in my
Wednesday and Thursday groups, and meanwhile my own husband is pretending that the whole point of all this huge internal work I'm doing is that my daughter was murdered [illegible] Yuk
more and more, literally the only beacons I still have in my life, my only north and south and east and west, are my emotions.

"And Ted's right on top of that. He thinks our culture attaches too much importance to feelings. He says it's out of control, it's not computers that are making everything virtual, it's mental health. Everyone's trying to correct their thoughts and improve their feelings and work on their relationships and parenting skills instead of just getting married and raising children like they used to, is what Ted says. We've jumped up to a new level of abstraction because we have too much time and money, is what he says, and he refuses to be a part of it. He wants to eat 'real' food and go to 'real' places and talk about 'real' things like business and science. So he and I don't really agree at all anymore on what's important in life.

"And he foxed my therapist, Enid. I had her to dinner so she could take a look at him, and you know those dinners the magazines say you shouldn't make for company, where you're in the kitchen for twenty minutes before every course?



[illegible] enough to function, and she believed he wasn't

[illegible] think magical or religious thoughts, but one [illegible] revenge I've had all these years isn't really my own. It's Ted's. He won't deal with it himself, and somebody's got to deal with it, so I do, as if I'm a surrogate mother except I'm not carrying a baby, I'm carrying emotions. Maybe if Ted had taken more responsibility for his feelings, and been less [illegible] have stayed just like I always was, and sold my [illegible] was Ted's being so rational and businesslike that pushed me over the edge. And so maybe the moral of this long story, which you've been a total dear to listen to, Enid, is that I can't stop finding a [illegible]

[illegible] elevators. Too-precipitous intima

level, however, Enid followed. She couldn't bear

"Just down the hall here," Enid said. But this se, she saw, was unsustainable. Tom have to pretend she'd been confused.

She waited with a gentle smile for Enid to on. But Enid didn't move on. She looked uncertainly. "I'm sorry. What deck is this."

and I'm supposed to be on a lower deck. A much lower deck. So, I'm sorry."

re Sylvia could say anything more, Enid s- while she was in the hospital, just imagine tigating herself for blundering down a hall she didn't belong on. Finally she veered to a cush- toned bench and slumped and began to weep.

strivers who booked the most el-cheapo "B" Deck inside staterooms on a luxury cruise ship; but a childhood without money had left her unable to

lt that she and Al were the only educated

It was a ten-dollar bill. Folded once. Very sweet.

down. The texture of engraving was delic

Feeling restored, she descended to the "B" Deck. her key card in the lock and pushed on he

stance and pushed

l, what on earth?"

Diurnality yielded w continuum of hours. She found Altred he door on a

turned on a light and occupied his field of visio Her immediate aim was to quiet him and get som ribly agitated and not finishing his sentences, n even making his verbs and nouns agree in num ber and person. He believed that it was mornin a faucet, and that nothing worked. Still he in sisted on doing everything his way, which led t a pushing and pulling, an actual blow to her shoul ed with his madly flopping hands to un it. She'd never heard him use the words "f**d" an "c**p," and the fluency with which he used then now illuminated years of prior silent usage in hi that it was very late and he was very confused Even now she couldn't help loving him. Maybe es pecially now. Maybe she'd known all along, for fift all the love she'd given her sons and daughter, al manding of her children. She soothed and berat asleep and her travel clock showed 5:10, and a 7:30 he was running his electric shaver. Not hav fine dressing and catastrophically bad going t breakfast, her tongue like a dust mop, her head like

poor footing. The regurgitative splats outside the Kierkegaard Room were almost rhythmic, a kind of music of chance, and Mrs. Nygren informa- tively brayed about the evils of caffeine and the quasi-bicamerality of the Storting, and the Soderblads arrived damp from intimate Swedish exertions, and somehow Al proved equal to con- versation with Ted Roth. Enid and Sylvia re- sumed relations stiffly, their emotional muscles pulled and aching from last night's overuse. They talked about the weather. An activities coordi- tive tidings and registration forms for the after- noon's outings in Newport, Rhode Island. With our of the town's historic homes and Norwegian social lepers passed along the clip- board without registering. "Sylvia!" she chid, her voice shaking, "you're not going on the tour?" Sylvia glanced at her bespectacled husband, who nodded like McGeorge Bundy greenlighting troops for Vietnam, and for a moment her blue eyes seemed to look inward; apparently she had that ability of the enviable, of the

res without regard to social expectations or
eeded all the charity she could
et. And so on up the day's steep
ng coastal leaves senesce from the
bsen Promenade, and downing
o prepare for her afternoon in
harming and historic Newport!
ort of call Alfred announced that his feet hurt too
much to venture ashore, and Enid made him
romise not to nap or he wouldn't sleep at night,
t was life and death?) implored Ted Roth to keep
im awake, and Ted replied that getting the Ny-
gren off the ship ought to help with that.

Smells of sun-warmed creosote and cold mus-
sels, of boat fuel and football fields and drying
kelp, an almost genetic nostalgia for things mar-
ftime and things autumnal, beset Enid as she
limped from the gangway toward the town bus.
The day was dangerously beautiful. Big gusts and
relaxed clouds and a fierce bronze sun blew the
gave around, agitating Newport's white clapboard
and mowed greens, making them unseeable
straight on. "Folks," the tour guide crowed, "just
sit back and drink it in." But that which can be
drunk can also drown. Enid had slept for six of the
previous fifty-five hours, and even as Sylvia
thanked her for inviting her along she felt and ha
had no energy for it either. The Astors and the
Vanderbilts, their pleasure domes and money: she
was sick of it. Sick of envying, sick of herself. She
didn't understand antiques or architecture, she
couldn't draw like Sylvia, she didn't read like Ted,
she had few interests and no expertise. A capac-
ity for love was the only true thing she'd ever
had. And so she tuned out the tour guide and
heeded the October magic of the yellow light, the
heart-mangling intensities of the season. In the
wind pushing waves across the bay, she could smell
night's approach. It was common as her last mys-
tery and pain and a strange yearning sense of pos-
sibility, almost as if heartbreak were a thing to be
sought and nursed forward. But like so many phe-
nomena that were beautiful at a historic chum-
derheads' volcanic eruptions, the storm and sun-
sets—this alluring pain proved, at closer range, to
be inhuman in its scale.

From Newport the *Carnival Mardi Gras* sailed
into sapphire gales. Heaving billows turned Enid
after an afternoon's exposure to big skies and the
though she won sixty more dollars in th

He raged and she wept and abused him.

He managed with his madly flopping hands to unbutton his pajama top as fast as she could button it.

awake listening to the anxiety bell ring
here was Alfred turning on lights
and a next-door neighbor banging on the wall
with his face twisted in paranoid psychosis
then whispering conspiratorially that he'd s
and unmaking of said beds, the application of a
diaper, the application of a second diap
dress some hallucinated exigency, and the balk-
ing of his nerve-damaged legs, and the bleating
the woman with the rawly abraded nam
traveler arriving at a train station differing from
twilight, the small miracles of restored visibility:
a chalky puddle in a gravel parking lot, th
twisting from a sheet-metal chimney—she was

On her map of the ship, at the stern
end of the "D" Deck, was the uni-
versal symbol of aid for those in
need. After breakfast she left
husband in conversation with the
Roths and made her way to this red cross. The
it in gold leaf. "Alfred" was the first word and
fred." She studied it truthlessly. No. Bel. No
He had a large, somewhat coarse skinned face
you this morning," he said, showing pearly te

"My husband gets strange at night sometimes," e said, averting her eyes. "Very agitated and dit- ult, and I can't sleep then. He locked me out ad so upset. And I hope so much I want to see

"Aslan will help you," Hibbard assured her in new, more sober voice. "A lot of travelers con- ler it a more important investment even than ancellation insurance. With all the money you've aid for the privilege of being here, Enith, you ave a right to feel your best at every moment. A uarrel with your spouse, anxiety about a pet ou've left behind, a perceived snub where none s intended: you can't afford these bad feelings. hink of it this way. If Aslan prevents you from issing just one prepaid Pleasurelines activity ue to your subclinical dysthymia, it has paid for self, by which I mean that your flat-fee consul- ation with me, at the end of which you'll eceive eight complimentary SampLpaks of 30- nilligram Aslan 'Cruiser,' has paid for itself."

"What is Ashland?"

Someone knocked on the outside door, and Hibbard shuddered as if to clear his head. "Edie, dder., Edna, Enid, excuse me one moment. I'm be- inning to understand that you really are *confused* bout the state-of-the-global-art psychopharma- ology that Pleasurelines is proud to make avail- ible to its discerning clientele. I see you need a bit nore explanation than most of our cruisers, and f you'll excuse me for just one moment—"

Hibbard took eight SampLpaks of Aslan from his console, actually troubled to lock the console and pocket the key, and stepped into the vestibule. Enid heard his murmur and the husky voice of the older man replying, "Twenty-five," "Monday," and "Newport." In less than two minutes the doctor returned, carrying some traveler's checks.

"Is this really all right what you're doing?" Enid asked. "I mean legally?"

"Good Q, Enid, but guess what: it's wonderfully legal." He examined one of the checks somewhat absently and then tucked them all into his shirt pocket. "Excellent question, though. Really ace Q. Professional ethics prevent me from selling the drugs I prescribe, so I'm confined to dispens- ing free samples, which luckily conforms to Plea- surelines' own *tutto è incluso* policy. Regrettably, since Aslan has yet to receive full American reg- ulatory approval, and since no state-of-the-art cruisers are American, and since Aslan's designer and mak- er, Farmacopea S.A., therefore has no incentive to provide me with complimentary samples suf- ficient to the extraordinary demand, I do find it necessary to purchase the complimentary samples in bulk. Hence my consulting fee, which might otherwise strike some as inflated."

"What's the actual cash value of the eight sam- ple packs?" Enid asked.

eighty-eight dollars, U.S."

sensitivity is 30 milligrams per day. In other w cruisers consider it a bargain."

"And tell me, though, what it is. Ashram?"

"Aslan. Named, I'm told, for a mythical crea- ture in ancient mythology. Mithraism, sun- worshipers and so forth. I'd be making it up if I told you any more. But my understanding is that Aslan was a great benign lion."

Enid's heart leaped in its cage. She took a SampLpak from the desk and examined the pills through the clear plastic. Each was a gold capsule with a small raised [illegible] and Enid could read the inscription on one of the pills: ASLAN ® Cruiser™ was the label.

"What's in it?" she asked.

"Absolutely nothing," Hibbard replied, "if you are in perfect mental health. However, let

"Aslan provides state-of-the-art factor regula- and-coke by comparison."

"It's an antidepressant."

"Crude term. 'Personality optimizer' is the phrase I prefer."

"And 'Cruiser'?"

stons," Hibbard said patiently. "But guess what. Optimal for a person enjoying a luxury cruise workplace. If you're asking what's specific to 'Cruiser,' it's mainly that it switches your anxi- ety to the off position. Turns that little dial right down to zero. Aslan 'Basic' won't do that, because to function day to day a moderate anxiety level is desirable. I'm on 'Basic' right now, for exam- ple, because I'm working."

action is effectively instantaneous. That's com- nosaurs they're still using Stateside. G Friday."

Dr. Hibbard was very handsome and charis- matic, and Enid liked the idea of a pill that would

"You're really, really, really sure this will help

"You'll feel emotionally more resilient," Hib-
felt. Your anxiety and oversensitivity
will disappear, as will any morbid concern
tion of others. Anything you're ashamed

Enid said. "Yes."



"
Elaine. A strong urge to confess, a
seemed to her forbiddingly complex, and Rev-
church was so friendly and nice,
and then, too, Alfred had always pooh-poohed her
lieved that when you were dead you were really
and Dr. Hibbard's account of things was
just a dumb old Midwesterner, so, but chang
Hibbard said.
"Well, no, but it's more my husband and my
Well, but if I'm a different person after I take

chemical coordinates of our character and tem
of the fear of death, right
I don't know what it will be like not to be me any
more. Imagine that. If I'm not around to tell
the difference, then what do I really care? Being
dead's only a problem if you know you're dead
which you never do because you're dead!"

"But it sounds like the drug makes everybody
the same."

"Gosh. Deep-deep. Wrong, because ques-
people can have the same personal-
ity and still be individuals. Two people
with the same IQ can have com-
pletely different knowledge and
memories. Right? Two very affec-
tionate people can have com-
pletely different objects of
affection. Maybe Aslan does
make us a little more alike. But
guess what, Enid. We're all still
individuals."

The doctor unleashed an espe-
cially lovable smile, and Enid, who
calculated that he was netting $62 per
consultation, decided that she'd now re-
ceived her money's worth of his time and atten-
tion, and she did what she'd known she would do
since she first laid eyes on the sunny, leonine
caplets. She reached into her purse and from the
Pleasurelines envelope that held her slot win-
nings she took a handful of cash and counted
out $150.

"All joy of the lion," Hibbard said with a wink
as he slid the stack of SampLpaks across his desk.
"Do you need a bag for that?"

With a pounding heart Enid made her way to
the lowest the "B" Deck. After the nightmare of
the previous day and nights she again had a con-
crete thing to look forward to; and how sweet
the optimism of the person carrying a newly
scored drug that she believed would change her
life. Universal the craving to escape the
givens of the self. No exertion more strenuous
than raising hand to mouth, no act more violent
than swallowing, no religious feeling, no faith in
anything more mystical than cause and effect
was required to experience a pill's transforma-
tive blessings. *She couldn't wait to take it.* She
treaded on air all the way to B11, where, happi-
ly
Alfred. As it to acknowledge
the illicit nature of her mission, she threw the
dead bolt on the hall door. Further locked herself
inside the bathroom. Raised her eyes to their re-
flected twins and, on a ceremonial impulse, re-
turned their gaze as she hadn't in months or
years. Pushed one golden Aslan through
the foil backing of its SampLpak. Placed it on her
tongue and swallowed it with water.

For a few minutes she brushed and flossed, a bit
of oral housekeeping to pass the time. Then with

sudden ecstatic exhaustion he went to her
l to lie and wait.
olden sunlight fell across the blankets in her
ndowless room.
He nuzzled her palm with his warm velvet
out. He licked her eyelids with a tongue both
ndpapery and slick. His breath was sweet and
agery.
When she came awake the cool halogen light-
g in the stateroom wasn't artificial anymore. It
s the cool light of sun from behind a momen-
y cloud.
I've taken the medication, she told herself. I've
xen the medication. I've taken the medication.

Her new emotional flexibility received a bold challenge the next morning when she rose at seven and discovered Alfred curled up fast asleep in the shower stall.

"Al, you're lying in the shower," she said. "This not the place to sleep."

Having awakened him, she began to brush her eth. Alfred opened undemented eyes and took ock. "Ugh, I am stiff stiff," he said.

"What on earth are you doing in there?" she rgled through a fluoride foam, ushing merrily away.

"Got all turned around in the ight," he said. "I had such reams."

Enid found that in the arms of vslan she had new reserves of pa ience for the wrist-strumming wig le-waggle brushstroke her den ist recommended for the sides of ier molars. She watched with low o medium interest as Alfred achieved full up- ightness through a multistage process of prop- ing, levering, hoisting, bracing, and controlled ipping. A lunatic dhoti of bunched and shred- ded diapers hung from his loins. "Look at this," he said, shaking his head. "Would you look at his."

"I had the most wonderful night's sleep," she answered.

"And how are our Floaters this morning?" roving activities coordinator Suzy Ghosh asked the tall lean in a voice like hair in a shampoo commercial.

"We didn't sink last night, if that's what you mean," said Sylvia Roth.

The Norwegians quickly monopolized Suzy with a complicated inquiry regarding lap swimming in the larger of the Grandon Mystal pools.

"Well, well, Signe," Mr. Soderblad remarked to his wife at an indiscreet volume, "this is indeed

"Once we burn up all the fossil fuels," said Dr. Roth, "we'll have a hot, nasty atmosphere that no one's seen for three hundred million years."

it stayed until yesterday, geologically speaking."

"Lap swimming, Signe. Do you suppose that this is similar to lap dancing?"

"Some people are disgusting," said Mrs. Nygren.

"There can never be another Carboniferous. how to biodegrade cellulose.'

land," Enid said.

off. Frost on the pumpkin. Furry things in dens. But now we have a very clever mammal that's taking all the carbon from underground and

"I think we own some Orfic Midland ourselves," Sylvia said.

"As a matter of fact," Per Nygren said, "we, too, own Orfic Midland."

"Per would know," said Mrs. Nygren.

Roth, "we'll have an antique atmosphere. A hot,

[illegible] million years. Once we've let the cat [illegible] the bird bath."

"Norway has superb retirement benefits, but I also supplement my coverage with a private fund. I [illegible] the price of each stock in the fund every morning. There are quite a number of [illegible] stocks. How many, Per?"

"Forty-six at present," Per Nygren said. "If I am not mistaken. One is a mutual fund for the Oak Ridge Fiduciary Investment Corporation. The stock has maintained its value quite well and pays a handsome dividend."

"I see nature," said Mr. Soderblad. "Where is my [illegible]?"

"But, Stig, do you know," said Signe Soderblad, "I [illegible] our upper middle class and their upper middle [illegible] class was that none of them, not even the richest family in town, had indoor plumbing."

"I am aware," said Mr. Soderblad, "that as a nonreader I am morally inferior to all Norwegians. I accept this."

"Flies like around something four days dead. Bucket of ashes that you sprinkle in the hole. And a glittering Ford Explorer parked in their driveway. And they're videotaping us videotaping them."

"At the same time, in spite of my disability, I do manage to enjoy a pleasure or two in life."

"How empty, though, Stig, our pleasures must be," said Signe Soderblad, "compared to those of the Nygrens."

"Yes, they do seem to experience the deep and lasting pleasures of the mind. At the same time, Signe, this is a very flattering dress you are wearing this morning. Even Mr. Nygren has been admiring this dress, in spite of the deep and lasting pleasures he finds elsewhere."

"Per, come along," said Mrs. Nygren. "We are being insulted."

It was as if when he lay in bed for a night certain humors pooled in the right or wrong places, like marinade around a flank steak

"I am quite sure we also have this stock, Orfic Midland."

"We own a great many stocks. I can't remember [illegible]. At the same time, [illegible] the print in the newspaper is very tiny."

"The moral of the story is don't recycle plastic. Send it on plastic to a landfill. Get that carbon underground."

"If it had been up to Al, we'd still have every penny in passbook savings."

"Bury it, bury it. Stopper the genie in the bottle."

"I happen to have a rare condition that makes it painful for me to read," said Mr. Soderblad.

"Oh really?" said Mrs. Nygren acidly. "What is the medical name of this condition?"

"I like a cool autumn day," said Dr. Roth.

"Then again," said Mrs. Nygren, "I suppose that to learn the condition's name would itself necessitate painful reading."

"[illegible] small planet."

"I [illegible] of course, but to have two *lazy* eyes at once."

"How is that really possible?" said Mr. Nygren. "The 'lazy eye' syndrome, or amblyopia, is a condition in which one eye assumes the work of the other. How can [illegible] the other is lazy?"

"Per, [illegible]," said Mrs. Nygren.

"Inga."

"Waiter, refill."

"[illegible] our upper middle class," said Dr. Roth. "I [illegible] the only [illegible] same [illegible] plumbing. [illegible] the only difference between

"Yes, they do seem to experience the deep and lasting pleasures of the mind. At the same time, Signe, this is a very flattering dress you are wearing this morning. Even Mr. Nygren has been admiring this dress, in spite of the deep and lasting pleasures he finds elsewhere."

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"The cashier at the DuPont executive dining room was an Uzbek girl. I've probably seen Uzbeks at the Ikea store in Plymouth Meeting. These aren't extraterrestrials we're talking about. Uzbeks wear bifocals. They fly on planes."

"Stig, did you hear? The Nygrens have been insulted and are leaving us."

"It is a great pity. They are such fun to be with."

"So in effect we've spent six thousand dollars to be reminded of what a pit toilet smells like."

"I'll never forget it," Alfred said.

"And are grateful for that pit toilet! In terms of the actual benefits of foreign travel. In terms of what TV and books can't give you. In terms of what you can only experience firsthand. Take away the pit toilet and we'd feel like we'd wasted six thousand dollars."

"Shall we go rot our brains on the Sun Deck?"

"Oh, Stig, let's. I am intellectually exhausted."

"Thank God for poverty. Thank God for driving on the left side of the road. Thank God for Babel. Thank God for strange voltages and oddly shaped plugs." Dr. Roth lowered his glasses and peered over them, observing the Swedish exodus. "I note in passing that every dress that woman owns is designed for quick removal."

"I've never seen Ted so eager to get to breakfast," Sylvia said. "And lunch. And dinner."

"Stunning northern scenery," Roth said. "Isn't that what we're here for?"

Alfred lowered his eyes uncomfortably. A little fish bone of prudery was stuck in Enid's throa

well. "Do you think he really has an eye problem?" she managed to say.

"His eye is excellent in at least one respect."

"Ted, though, stop."

"That the Swedish bombshell is a stale cliché itself a stale cliche."

"Please stop."

The retired vice president of compliance ushed his glasses back up his nose and turned to Alfred. "I wonder if we're depressed because we an't pretend anymore there's a place no one's een. I wonder if aggregate depression is on the ise, worldwide."

"I feel wonderful this morning. Slept so well."

"Lab rats become listless in overcrowded conitions."

"You do, Enid, seem transformed. Just tell me his isn't related to that doctor on the 'D' Deck. hear stories."

"Stories?"

"The so-called cyber frontier," said Dr. Roth, but where's the wilderness?"

"A drug called Aslan," Sylvia said.

"Aslan?"

"The so-called space frontier," said Dr. Roth, 'but I like this earth. It's a good planet. There's a scarcity of atmospheric cyanide, sulfuric acid, ammonia. Which is a boast by no means every planet can make."

"Grandmother's little helper, I think they call it."

"But even in your big quiet house you feel crowded if there's a big quiet house at the antipodes and every point in between."

"All I ask is a little privacy," Alfred said.

"No beach between Greenland and the Falklands that isn't threatened with development. No acre uncleared."

"Oh dear, what time is it?" Enid said. "We don't want to miss that lecture."

"Sylvia's different. She likes the hubbub at the docks."

"I do like the hubbub," Sylvia said.

"Gangways, portholes, stevedores. She likes the blast of the horn. To me this is a floating theme park."

"You have to put up with a certain amount of fantasy," Alfred said. "It can't be helped."

"Uzbekistan didn't agree with my stomach," Sylvia said.

"I like all the waste up here," said Dr. Roth. "Good to see such vast useless mileage."

"You romanticize poverty."

"I beg your pardon?"

"We've traveled in Bulgaria," Alfred said. "I don't know about Uzbekistan, but we've traveled in China. If it were up to me, I'd tear it all down. Tear it down and start over. The houses don't have to be pretty, just make them solid. Get the plumbing indoors. A good concrete wall

[illegible]

"That's a lot of environmentalist nonsense."

"Alfred, you're too smart a man to call it nonsense."

"I am in need of a bathroom."

"Al, when you're done, why don't you take a book outside and [illegible] going to the investment lecture. You just sit. In the sun. And relax relax relax."

He had good days and bad days. It was as if [illegible] night certain humors pooled in the right or wrong [illegible] nade around a flank steak, and in the morning his nerve endings either had enough of what they needed or did not; as if his mental clarity might depend on something as simple as whether he'd lain on his side or on his back the night before; or as if, more disturbingly, he were a damaged transistor radio that [illegible] shaking might function loud and clear or spew nothing but a static laced with unconnected phrases, the odd strain of music.

Still, even the worst morning was better than the best night. In the morning every process *quickened*, speeding his meds to their destinations: the canary-yellow spansule for incontinence, the small pink Tums-like thing for the shakes, the white oblong to discourage nausea, the wan blue tablet to squelch hallucinations from the small pink Tums-like thing. In the morning the blood was crowded with commuters, the glucose [illegible] workers, hemoglobinous deliverymen carrying loads of freshly brewed oxygen in their dented vans, the stern foremen like insulin, the enzymic middle managers and executive epinephrine, leukocyte cops and EMS workers, expensive consultants [illegible] nary-yellow limos, everyone riding the aortal elevator and dispersing through the arteries. Before noon the [illegible] world was newborn.

He [illegible] lopingly careened through a red-carpeted hallway that had previously vouchsafed him a comfort station, but this [illegible] M or W in sight, just salons and boutiques and the Ingmar Bergman Cinema. The problem was that his nervous system could no longer be relied on for an accurate assessment of his need to go. At night his solution was to wear protection. By day his solution was to visit a bathroom hourly and [illegible] had an accident to hide. The raincoat had the

[illegible] of unfounded bird's romantic sensibilities, and his hourly stops the added virtue of lending structure to his life. Simply holding things [illegible]—simply keeping the ocean of meat terrors from breaching the last bulkhead—was his [illegible].

Throngs of women were streaming toward the Longstocking Ballroom. A strong eddy in their current swept Alfred into a hallway lined with the staterooms of onboard lecturers and entertainers.

The day world floated on the night world and the night world tried to swamp the day world and he worked and worked to keep the day world watertight

[illegible] the end of this hall a men's room beckoned.

An officer in epaulets was using one of the two urinals. Afraid of failing to perform under scrutiny, Alfred entered a stall and slid the bolt and found himself face to face with an ordure-strafed toilet. Something scurried on the floor: a mobile turd, ducking for cover.

Alfred stumbled from the bathroom and fled up a staircase, higher and higher, up seven flights to the periphery of the Sports Deck. Here he found [illegible] in late sunlight. From the pocket of his raincoat he took a map of Canada's maritime provinces and tried to fix himself within a grid, identify some landmarks.

Three old men in Gore-Tex parkas were standing at the rail. "Here's a fellow with a map," one of them said. He came over to Alfred looking happy in the way of all men in the world except Alfred. "Excuse me, sir. What do you reckon we're looking at up here on the left?"

"That is the Gaspé Peninsula," Alfred answered firmly. "There should be a large town coming up around the bend."

"Thank you very much."

The men returned to their computations. Was the ship's location mattered greatly, as if only the quest for this information had brought them to the Sports Deck to begin with. All three immediately departed for a lower deck, leaving Alfred alone on top of the world.

The protective sky was thinner in this country of northern water. Clouds ran in packs resembling narwhals, middle-humpalling beneath the [illegible] which hung unnaturally low. One approached the ultima Thule here. Outcroppings [illegible] to the horizon that stretched west to the limit of visibility, as in the purposeless rushing of the clouds, as in the air's supernal clarity, there was nothing local.

Odd to glimpse infinity precisely in a finite curve, eternity precisely in the seasonal.

Alfred had recognized the turd in the bathroom before it could duck out of sight. But a locomotive turd had no business in the bathroom of a luxury cruise ship, and this worried him. The turd was a creature from the night but was afoot in broad daylight, and this worried him a lot.

According to Ted Roth, holes in the ozone layer started at the poles. It was during the long arctic night that the earth's shell first weakened, but once the shell was punctured the damage spread outward, encroaching even on the sunny tropics—even the equator—and soon no spot on the globe was safe.

Meanwhile an observatory in the far nether regions had sent out a feeble signal, an ambiguous message.

Alfred received the signal and wondered what to do about it. He felt shy of bathrooms now, but he couldn't very well drop his trousers out here in the open. The three men might return at any moment.

Beyond a protective railing to his right was a collection of thickly painted planes and cylinders, two navigational spheres, an inverted cone. Since he was not afraid of heights, nothing prevented him from ignoring the strongly worded warning in four languages, squeezing past the railing, and stepping out onto the sandpapery metal surface to seek, as it were, a tree to pee behind. He was high above everything and invisible.

But too late.

Both legs of his trousers were soaked, the left leg nearly to his ankle. Warm-cold wetness all over everything.

And where a town should have appeared on the coast, the land instead was dropping away. Gray waves marched across strange waters, and the tremor of the engines became more labored, less easy to ignore. The ship had either not reached the Gaspé Peninsula or had already passed it. The data he'd transmitted to the men in parkas was faulty. He was lost.

And from the deck immediately below him came a windborne giggle. It came again, a trilling squeal, a northern lark.

He edged away from the spheres and cylinders and leaned out past the outer railing. A few yards farther astern was a small "nordic" sunbathing area, sequestered behind cedar fencing, and a man standing where no passenger was permitted to stand could see right over the fencing and behold [illegible] had, her chill-stippled arms and thighs and belly, the plump twin cloudberries into which a suddenly gray winter sky had drawn her nipples, the quaking ginger fur between her legs.

The day world floated on the night world and
e night world tried to swamp the day world
d he worked and worked to keep the day world
ntertight. But there had been grievous breach
Came another cloud then, larger, denser, that
rned the gulf below it to a greenish black. Ship
d shadow in collision.

And shame and despair.

Or was it the wind catching the sail of his rain-
at?

Or was it the ship's pitching?

Or the tremor in his legs?

Or the corresponding tremor of the engines?

Or a fainting spell?

Or vertigo's standing invitation?

Or the relative warmth of open water's invi-
tion to someone soaked and freezing in
ne wind?

Or was he leaning, deliberately, to glimpse
gain the gingery mons?

"How fitting it is," said internationally noted investment counselor Jim Crolius, "to be talking money on a Nordic Pleasurelines Luxury Fall Color Cruise. Folks, it's a beautiful sunny horning, isn't it?"

Crolius was speaking from a lectern beside an asel on which the title of his talk—"Surviving he Corrections"—was written in purple ink. His uestion brought murmurs of assent from the first ew rows in front of him, the people who'd arrived arly for good seats. Someone up there even said, Yes, Jim!"

Enid felt ever so much better this morning, ut a few atmospheric disturbances still lingered n her head, for example a squall now consisting f a) resentment of the women who'd come to the ongstocking Ballroom absurdly early, as if the po-ential lucrativeness of Jim Crolius's advice might omehow decline with one's distance from him, nd b) particular resentment of the pushy New ork kind of woman who elbowed in ahead of veryone to establish a first-name relationship vith a lecturer (she was sure that Jim Crolius ould see right through their presumption and ollow flattery, but he might be too polite to ig-ore them and focus on less pushy and more de-erving midwestern women such as Enid) and c) ntense irritation with Alfred for having stopped n a bathroom *twice* on the way to breakfast, vhich had prevented her from leaving the Kierkegaard Room early and securing a good ront-row seat herself.

Almost as soon as the squall had gathered it dis-ppeared, however, and the sun shone strongly gain.

"Well, I hate to break it to you folks in the back," Jim Crolius was saying, "but from where I stand, up here on the gangway between clouds on the horizon. Those could be friendly lit-tle white clouds. Fluffy cauliflowers. Appearances can be deceiving. From where I stand I may think I see a safe course ahead, but I'm no expert. I may be piloting the ship straight into a reef. You wouldn't go to sea on a ship without a captain, would you? A captain who's got all the maps and gadgets, all the bells and whistles, the whole nine yards. Right? You got your radar. Global Positioning. Long-range scanning off each midthings and all-weather your satellite-uplink-interface. It's all very technical. But somebody's got to have that information, or we could all be in big trouble. Right? This is *deep* sea. This is real life. What I'm saying is you may not want to master all that technical stuff personally, all the bells and whistles, the whole nine yards. But you better hope you've got a good captain, you've got all high seas of high finance."

There was applause from the front rows.

"He must literally think we're eight years old," Sylvia Roth whispered to Enid.

"This is just his introduction," Enid whispered back.

"Now, another way that I'm like," Jim Crolius continued, "is that we're here to—the falling leaves. The year has its rhythms—winter, spring, summer, fall. The whole thing is cyclical. You got your upswings in the spring, you got your downturns in the fall. It's just like the market. Cyclical business, right? You can't fight it. The market for five, ten, even fifteen years. We've seen it in our lifetime. But we've also seen corrections. I may look like I'm just a kid, but I've even seen recessions. I've seen bear markets. Heavy stuff. Cyclical business. People, we've got a lot of green out there right now. It's been a long, glorious summer. In fact, let me see a show of hands here. How many of you have gained profits either entirely or in part, on the strength of your investments?"

Forest of raised hands.

Jim Crolius nodded with satisfaction. "Well, folks, I hate to break it to you, but those leaves are starting to turn. No matter how green things are for you right now, it's not going to survive the winter. Of course, every year is different, every cycle's different. I can't tell you exactly when that green is going to turn. But we're here, every one of us, because we're foresighted people. Every person in this room has proved to me she's a smart investor, just by virtue of being here. You know why? Because every person in this room had the foresight to know that something was going to change on this cruise. And the question we all have—I'm speaking in metaphors here—the question is: will all



that glorious [illegible] there turn to glorious gold? Or will it all just wither on the branch in the winter of our discontent?"

The Lone Star Room was electric with excitement now. There were murmurs of "Marvelous! Marvelous!"

"More matter and less art," Sylvia Roth said drily.

Death, Enid thought. He was talking about death. And all the people clapping were crazy!

But where was the sting of this realization? Aslan had taken it away.

Jim Crolius turned now to the easel and flipped over the first of its big newsprint pages. The second page was headed WHEN THE CLIMATE CHANGES, and the categories—Funds, Bonds, Common Stock, etc.—blew a gasp from the front row out of all proportion to the informational content. For an instant it seemed to Enid as if Jim Crolius were doing a technical market analysis of the kind that [illegible] had told her never to pay attention to. Discounting the minimal effects of wind drag at low velocities, something "plummeting" (a thing of value "plunging" in a [illegible] experienced an acceleration due to gravity of 32 feet per second squared, and, acceleration being the second-order derivative of distance, the analyst could interpolate [illegible] the object had fallen [illegible] by [illegible] its velocity, 16 feet per second, it passed the center of a window 8 feet tall, and, assuming a 6-foot-long object, and also assuming for simplicity's sake a constant velocity over the interval, derive a figure approximately [illegible] second of full or partial visibility. Four tenths of a second wasn't much. If you were looking aside and mentally [illegible] or [illegible] and then [illegible] of a young killer, all that registered was something dark flashing by. But if you happened to be gazing directly at the window in question and you happened as well to be feeling unprecedentedly calm, four tenths of a second was more than enough time to identify the falling object as your husband of forty-seven years; to notice that he was wearing the *awful* black raincoat, which had lost its shape and should never have been worn in public but which he'd willfully packed for the trip and willfully carried with him everywhere; to experience not only the certainty that something terrible had happened but also a peculiar sense of intrusion, as if you were witnessing an event that nature had never intended you to witness, like the impact of a meteorite or the copulation of whales; and even to observe the expression on your husband's face, to register its almost youthful beauty, its peculiar serenity, for who could have anticipated the grace with which the raging man would fall?

He was remembering the nights he'd sat upstairs with one or both of his boys or with his girl in the crook of his arm, their damp bath-smelling heads hard against his ribs as he read aloud to them from *Black Beauty* or *The Narnia Chronicles*. How his voice alone, its palpable resonance, had made them drowsy. These were evenings, and there were hundreds of them, maybe thousands, when nothing traumatic enough to leave a scar had befallen the nuclear unit. Evenings of plain vanilla closeness in his black leather chair, sweet evenings of doubt between the nights of bleak certainty. They came to him now, these forgotten counterexamples, because in the end, when you were falling into water, there was no solid thing to reach for but your children. ■

MAID TO ORDER

The politics of other women's work

By Barbara Ehrenreich

In line with growing class polarization, the classic posture of submission is making a stealthy comeback. "We scrub your floors the old-fashioned way," boasts the brochure from Merry Maids, the largest of the residential-cleaning services that have sprung up in the last two decades, "on our hands and knees." This is not a posture that independent "cleaning ladies" willingly assume—preferring, like most people who clean their own homes, the sponge mop wielded from a standing position. In her comprehensive 1999 guide to homemaking, *Home Comfort*, Cheryl Mendelson warns: "Never ask hired housecleaners to clean your floors on their hands and knees; the request is likely to be regarded as degrading." But in a society in which 40 percent of the wealth is owned by 1 percent of households while the bottom 20 percent reports negative assets, the degradation of others is readily purchased. Kneepads entered American political discourse as a tool of the sexually subservient, but employees of Merry Maids, The Maids International, and other corporate cleaning services spend hours every day on these kinky devices, wiping up the drippings of the affluent.

I spent three weeks in September 1999 as an employee of The Maids International in Portland, Maine, cleaning, along with my fellow team members, approximately sixty houses containing a total of about 250 scrubbable floors—bathrooms, kitchens, and entryways requiring the hands-and-knees treatment. It's a different world down there below knee level, one that few adults voluntarily enter. Here you find elaborate dust structures held together by a scaffolding of dog hair, dried bits of pistachio shell, and the occasional sauce; the congealed remains of gravies, jellies, contraceptive creams, vomit, and urine. Sometimes, too, you encounter some fragment of a human being: a child's legs, stamping by in disgust because the maids are still present when he gets home from school, more commonly, the lowered head and electrolyzed calves of the female homeowner. Looking up, you may find this person staring at you, arms folded, in attitudes ranging from [illegible]. In rare instances she may try to help in some vague, symbolic way, by moving the cockatoo's cage, for example, or apologizing for the fact that she [illegible]

Barbara Ehrenreich is a contributing [illegible] and Dime: Or, Not Getting By in America [illegible]

THE RADICAL IDEA WAS THAT HOUSEWORK WAS A RELATIONSHIP NOT ONLY BETWEEN A WOMAN AND A DUST BUNNY BUT BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE

miniature indoor tree. Mostly, though, she will not see you at all and may even sit down with her mail at a table in the very room you are cleaning, where she would remain completely unaware of your existence unless you were to crawl under that table and start gnawing away at her ankles.

Housework, as you may recall from the feminist theories of the Sixties and Seventies, was supposed to be the great equalizer of women. Whatever else women did—jobs, school, child care—we also did housework, and if there were some women who hired others to do it for them, they seemed too privileged and rare to include in the theoretical calculus. All women were workers, and the home was their workplace—unpaid and unsupervised, to be sure, but a workplace no less than the offices and factories men repaired to every morning. If men thought of the home as a site of leisure and recreation—a "haven in a heartless world"—this was to ignore the invisible female proletariat that kept it cozy and humming. We were on the march now, or so we imagined, united against a society that devalued our labor even as it waxed mawkish over "the family" and "the home." Shoulder to shoulder and arm in arm, women were finally getting up off the floor.

In the most eye-catching elaboration of the home-as-workplace theme, Marxist feminists Maria Rosa Dallacosta and Selma James proposed in 1972 that the home was in fact an economically productive and significant workplace, an extension of the actual factory, since housework served to "reproduce the labor power" of others, particularly men. The male worker would hardly be in shape to punch in for his shift, after all, if some woman had not fed him, laundered his clothes, and cared for the children who were his contribution to the next generation of workers. If the home was a quasi-industrial workplace staffed by women for the ultimate benefit of the capitalists, then it followed that "wages for housework" was the obvious demand.

But when most American feminists, Marxist or otherwise, asked the Marxist question *cui bono?* they tended to come up with a far simpler answer—men. If women were the domestic proletariat, then men made up the class of domestic exploiters, free to lounge while their mates scrubbed. In consciousness-raising groups, we railed against husbands and boyfriends who refused to pick up after themselves, who were unaware of housework at all, unless of course it hadn't been done. The "dropped socks," left by a man for a woman to gather up and launder, joined lipstick and spike heels as emblems of gender oppression. And if, somewhere, a man had actually dropped a sock in the calm expectation that his wife would retrieve it, it was a sock heard round the world. Wherever second-wave feminism took root, battles broke out between lovers and spouses over sticky countertops, piled-up laundry, and who or whom it was to do the dishes.

The radical new idea was that housework was not only a relationship between a woman and a dust bunny or an unmade bed; it also defined a relationship between human beings, typically husbands and wives. This represented a marked departure from the more conservative Betty Friedan, who in *The Feminine Mystique* had never thought to enter the male sex into the equation, as either part of the housework problem or part of an eventual solution. She raged against a society that consigned its educated women to what she saw as essentially janitorial chores, beneath "the abilities of a woman of average or normal human intelligence," and, according to unidentified studies she cited, "peculiarly suited to the capacities of feeble-minded girls." But men are virtually exempt from housework in *The Feminine Mystique*—why [illegible] were so. At one point she even disparages a "Mrs. G," who "somehow couldn't get her housework done before her husband came home at night, [and] was stunned the truth that he had to do it." Educated women would just have to become more efficient so that housework could no longer "expand to fill the time available."

Or they could hire other women to do it—an option approved by Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* as well as by the National Organization for Wom-

, which [illegible] Humphrey. At the 1973 [illegible] to extend the Fair Labor Standards Act to household [illegible] tified on the affirmative side, arguing that improved wages and working con tions would attract more women to the field, an bolstered the commonly ac ntradictory prediction that "the demand for household help [illegible] me will continue to increase as more women need [illegible] me." One NOW member added, on a personal note: "Like many [illegible] omen today, I am in school in order to develop a rewarding career [illegible] t. I also have a home to run and am fully conceive of the need for [illegible] old help as my free time at home becomes more and more [illegible] I know [that] housework is dirty, tedious work, and they are willing to pay [illegible] have it done."[illegible] On the aspirations of the women paid to clean [illegible] at at least some of them were bright enough to entertain a few [illegible] tedium not these members of NOW had, at the time, a word for is.

So the insight that distinguished the more radical, post-Friedan [illegible] of minists was that when we talk about housework, we are really talking [illegible] gain, about power. Housework was not degrading because it was manual la or, as Friedan thought, but because it was nbedded in degrading relationships and evitably served to reinforce them. To make mess that another person will have to deal ith—the dropped socks, the toothpaste prayed on the bathroom mirror, the dirty ishes left from a late-night snack—is to xert domination in one of its more silent nd intimate forms. One person's arro ance—or indifference, or hurry—becomes nother person's occasion for toil. And when he person who is cleaned up after is con stently male, while the person who cleans p is consistently female, you have a for mula for reproducing male domination from ne generation to the next.



Hence the feminist perception of house work as one more way by which men ex ploit women or, more neutrally stated, as "a ymbolic enactment of gender relations." An arly German women's liberation cartoon epicted a woman scrubbing on her hands nd knees while her husband, apparently excited by this pose, approaches from ehind, unzipping his fly. Hence, too, the second-wave feminists' revulsion t the hiring of maids, especially when they were women of color. At a femi nist conference I attended in 1980, poet Audre Lorde chose to insult the all oo-white audience by accusing them of being present only because they had lack housekeepers to look after their children at home. She [illegible] rowd; most of the assembled radical feminists would no sooner have employed black maid than they would have attached Confederate flag stickers to the ear windows of their cars. But accusations like hers, repeated in countless con erences and meetings, reinforced our rejection of the servant option. There already were at least two able-bodied adults in the average home—[illegible] woman—and the hope was that, after a few initial skirmishes, they would learn to share the housework graciously.

A couple of decades later, however, the average household still falls far short of that goal. True, women do less housework than they did before the femi nist revolution and the rise of the two-income family. Down from [illegible] of 30 hours per week in 1965 to 17.5 hours in 1995, according to [illegible] study by the University of Maryland. Some of that decline reflects a relaxation of standards rather than a redistribution of chores; women still [illegible] of whatever housework—including bill paying, pet care, tidying, and lawn care—gets done. The inequity is sharpest for the most despised [illegible]



chores declined in the thirty years between 1965 and 1995, men increased the time they spent scrubbing, vacuuming, and sweeping by 240 percent—[illegible] all the way up to [illegible] hours per week—while women decreased their cleaning time by only 7 percent, to 6.7 hours per week. The averages conceal a variety of arrangements, of course, from minutely negotiated sharing to the most clichéd division of labor, as described by one woman to the *Washington Post*: "I take care of the inside, he takes care of the outside." But perhaps the most disturbing finding is that almost the entire increase in male participation took place between the 1975 and the mid 1985. Fifteen years after the apparent cessation of hostilities, it is probably not too soon to announce the score: in the "chore wars" of the Seventies and Eighties, women gained a little ground, but overall, and after a few strategic concessions, men won.

Enter then, the cleaning lady as *deus ex machina*, restoring tranquillity as well as order to the home. Marriage counselors recommend her as an alternative to squabbling, as do many within the cleaning industry itself. A Chicago cleaning woman quotes one of her clients as saying that if she gives up the service, "my husband and I will be divorced in six months." When the trend toward hiring out was just beginning to take off, in 1988, the owner of a Merry Maids franchise in Arlington, Massachusetts, told the *Christian Science Monitor*, "I told some women I say, 'We even save marriages in this new eighties period you expect more from the male partner, but very often you don't get the cooperation you would like to have. The alternative is to pay somebody to come in....'" Another Merry Maids franchise owner has learned to capitalize more directly on housework-related spats; he closes between 30 and 35 percent of his sales by making follow-up calls Saturday mornings, which is "prime time for arguing over the fact that the house is a mess." The micro defeat of feminism in the household opened a new door for women, only this time it was the servants' entrance.

In 1999, somewhere between 14 and 18 percent of households employed an outsider to do the cleaning, and the numbers have been rising dramatically. Mediamark Research reports a 53 percent increase, between 1995 and 1999, in the number of households using a hired cleaner or service once a month or more, and Maritz Marketing finds that 30 percent of the people who hired help in 1999 did so for the first time that year. Among my middle-class, professional women friends and acquaintances, including some who made important contributions to the early feminist analysis of housework, the employment of a maid is now nearly universal. This sudden emergence of a servant class is consistent with what some economists have called the "Brazilianization" of the American economy: We are dividing along the lines of traditional Latin American societies—into a tiny overclass and a huge underclass, with the latter available to perform intimate household services for the former. Or, to put it another way, the home, or at least the affluent home, is finally becoming what radical feminists in the Seventies only imagined it was—a true "workplace" for women and a tiny, though increasingly visible, part of the capitalist economy. And the question is: As the home becomes a workplace for someone else, is it still a place [illegible] would want to live?

Strangely, or perhaps not so strangely at all, no one talks about the "politics of housework" anymore. The demand for "wages for housework" [illegible] with the [illegible]

which women once rallied support in their struggle with [illegible]
academy, according to the feminist sociologists I interviewed, [illegible]
s lost much of its former cachet—in part, I suspect, because [illegible]
ists actually do it. Most Americans, over 80 percent, still [illegible]
omes, but the minority who do not include a sizable fraction of [illegible]
pinion makers and culture producers—professors, writers, editorial [illegible]
ns, talking heads, and celebrities of all sorts. In their homes, their culture,
housework is becoming a politics not only of gender but of race and
ss—and these are subjects that the opinion-making elite, if not most Amer
ans, generally prefer to avoid.

Even the number of paid houseworkers is hard to pin down. The Census
reau reports that there were 549,000 domestic workers in 1998, up 9 per
nt since 1996, but this may be a considerable underestimate, since a
uch of the servant economy is still underground. In 1995, two years after
e Baird lost her chance to be attorney general for paying her undocumented
nny off the books, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that fewer than 1 per
nt of those Americans who paid a housecleaner reported those payments
o the IRS. Sociologist Mary Romero, one of the few academics who retain
n active interest in housework and the women who do it for pay, offers an
xample of how severe the undercounting can be: the 1980 Census found
nly 1,063 "private household workers" in El Paso, Texas, though the city
stimated their numbers at 13,400 and local bus drivers estimated that half
f the 28,300 daily bus trips were taken by maids going to and from work.
he honesty of employers has increased since the Baird scandal, but most
xperts believe that household workers remain, in large part, uncounted
nd invisible to the larger economy.

One thing you can say with certainty about the population of household
orkers is that they are disproportionately women of color. "Lower" kinds of
eople for a "lower" kind of work. Of the "private household cleaners and
ervants" it managed to locate in 1998, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports
hat 36.8 percent were Hispanic, 15.8 percent Black, and 2.7 percent "all
r." Certainly the association between housecleaning and minority status is
ell established in the psyches of the white employing class. When my
daughter, Rosa, was introduced to the wealthy father of a Harvard classmate,
e ventured that she must have been named for a favorite maid. And Au
dre Lorde can perhaps be forgiven for her intemperate accusation at the
eminist conference mentioned above when we consider an experience she
ad in 1967: "I wheel my two-year-old daughter in a shopping cart through
supermarket . . . and a little white girl riding past in her mother's cart calls
ut excitedly, 'Oh look, Mommy, a baby maid.'" But the composition of the
ousehold workforce is hardly fixed and has changed with the life chances
f the different ethnic groups. In the late nineteenth century, Irish and
erman immigrants served the northern upper and middle classes, then left
or the factories as soon as they could. Black women replaced them, ac
ounting for 60 percent of all domestics in the 1940s, and dominated the field
ntil other occupations began to open up to them. Similarly, West Coast maids
ere disproportionately Japanese American until that group, too, found
ore congenial options. Today, the color of the hand that pushes the sponge
aries from region to region: Chicanas in the Southwest, Caribbean women in
New York, native Hawaiians in Hawaii, whites, many of recent rural ex
raction, in Maine.

The great majority—though again, no one knows exact numbers—of paid
ousekeepers are freelancers, or "independents," who find their clients through
gencies or networks of already employed friends and relatives. To my ac
quaintances in the employing class, the freelance housekeeper seems to be a
airly privileged and prosperous type of worker, a veritable aristocrat of labor:
ometimes paid $15 an hour or more and usually said to be viewed as a friend
r even treated as "one of the family." But the shifting ethnic composition
f the workforce tells another story: this is a kind of work that many [illegible]
rapped in—by racism, imperfect English skills, immigration status, or lack

[illegible]

Monitor in 1986 about her et-

employers in Manhattan, without any regular pay, and was given no accommodations beyond a pull-out bed in her employers' living room. Hers is

ual assaults were charged, and Ms. Senghor was apparently fed. What gives this case a certain ruetul poignancy is that her employer, former U.N. em-

ing impersonality of capitalism by several thousand years, conditions of work being still largely defined by the idiosyncrasies of the employers. Some of them

Black

for example, kicking a live-in nanny for refusing to make

problems—all these are the sole concern of the company, meaning the lo-

cleaning services are the ideal solution for anyone still sensitive enough to

Merry Maids, *Franchise Times* reported tersely that

Americans look to out-

Still cleaning services do well, and there is a

As the industry moves from the entrepreneurial to the industrial phase, probably most strikingly, in this case, in the matter of pay.



ugh rate of failure among informal, mom-and-pop services. The "boom" is oncentrated among the national and international chains—outfits like Merry Maids, Molly Maids, Mini Maids, Maid Brigade, and The Maids International—all named, curiously enough, to highlight the more unique aspects of the industry, though the "maid" may occasionally be male. Merry Maids laimed to be growing at 15 to 20 percent a year in 1996, and spokesmen for both Molly Maids and The Maids International told me that their firms' ales are growing by 25 percent a year; local franchisers are equally bullish. Dan Libby, my boss at The Maids, confided to me that he could double his usiness overnight if only he could find enough reliable employees. To this nd, The Maids offers a week's paid vacation, health insurance after ninety days, and a free breakfast every morning consisting—at least where I worked—f coffee, doughnuts, bagels, and bananas. Some franchises have dealt with he tight labor market by participating in welfare-to-work projects that not nly funnel employees to them but often subsidize their paychecks with pub-ic money, at least for the first few months of work (which doesn't mean the ewly minted maid earns more, only that the company has to pay her less). The Merry Maids franchise in the city where I worked is conveniently located block away from the city's welfare office.

Among the women I worked with at The Maids, only one said she had previously worked as an independent, and she professed to be pleased with her new status as a cleaning-service employee. She no longer needed a car to get her from house to house and could take a day off—unpaid of course—to stay home with a sick child without risking the loss of a customer. I myself could see the advantage of not having to deal directly with the customers, who were sometimes at home while we worked and eager to make use of their supervisory skills: criticisms of our methods, and demands that we perform unscheduled tasks, could simply be referred to the franchise owner.

But there are inevitable losses for the workers as any industry moves from the entrepreneurial to the industrial phase, probably most strikingly, in this case, in the matter of pay. At Merry Maids, I was promised $200 for a forty-hour week, the manager hastening to add that "you can't calculate it in dollars per hour" since the forty hours include all the time spent traveling from house to house—up to five houses a day—which is unpaid. The Maids International, with its straightforward starting rate of $6.63 an hour, seemed preferable, though this rate was conditional on perfect attendance. Miss one day and your wage dropped to $6 an hour for two weeks, a rule that weighed particularly heavily on those who had young children. In addition, I soon learned that management had ways of shaving off nearly an hour's worth of wages a day. We were told to arrive at 7:30 in the morning, but our billable hours began only after we had been teamed up, given our list of houses for the day, and packed off in the company car at about 8:00 A.M. At the end of the day, we were no longer paid from the moment we left the car, though as much as fifteen minutes of work—refilling cleaning-fluid bottles, etc.—remained to be done. So for a standard nine-hour day, the actual pay amounted to about $6.10 an hour, unless you were still being punished for an absence, in which case it came out to $5.50 an hour.

Nor are cleaning-service employees likely to receive any of the perks or tips familiar to independents—free lunches and coffee, cast-off clothing, or a Christmas gift of cash. When I asked, only one of my coworkers could recall ever receiving a tip, and that was a voucher for a free meal at a downtown restaurant owned by a customer. The customers of cleaning services are probably no stingier than the employers of independents, they just don't know their cleaning people and probably wouldn't even recognize them on the street.

DEVASTATED WAS SUCH A [illegible]
BELIEVE [illegible] HOW NEW
[illegible] WHO [illegible] MY ARM HAIR [illegible]
MADE [illegible] FEEL WHILE WAITING
[illegible] LIVELY KNOCK ON THE DOOR



Plus customers probably assume that the fee they pay the service—$25 per person hour in the case of The Maids franchise I worked for—goes largely to the workers who do the actual cleaning.

But before I relate my encounters with the cleaning service clients, at least my anecdotes, historical perspective is that they are finally transforming the home into a fully capitalist-style workplace, and in ways that the old wages-for-housework advocates could never have imagined. A house is an innately difficult workplace to control, especially a house with ten or more rooms like so many of those we cleaned; workers may remain out of one another's sight for as much as an hour at a time. For independents, the ungovernable nature of the home-as-workplace means a certain amount of autonomy. They can take breaks (although this is probably ill-advised if the homeowners are on the premises), they can ease the monotony by listening to the radio or TV while they work. But cleaning services lay down rules meant to enforce a factorylike—or even conventlike—discipline on their far-flung employees. At The Maids, there were no breaks except for a daily ten-minute stop at a convenience store for coffee or "lunch"—meaning something like a slice of pizza. Otherwise, the time spent driving between houses was considered our "break" and the only chance to eat, drink, or (although this was also officially forbidden) smoke a cigarette. When the houses were spaced well apart, I could eat my sandwich in one sitting; otherwise it would have to be divided into as many as three separate, hasty snacks.

Within a customer's house, nothing was to touch our lips at all, not even water—a rule that, on hot days, I sometimes broke by drinking from a bathroom faucet. TVs and radios were off-limits, and we were never, ever, to curse out loud, even in an ostensibly deserted house. There might be a homeowner secreted in some locked room, we were told, ear pressed to the door, or, more likely, a tape recorder or video camera running. At the time, I dismissed this as a scare story, but I have since come across ads for devices like the Tech-7 "incredible concealed camera" designed to "get a visual record of your babysitter's actions" and "watch employees to prevent theft." It was the threat or rumor of hidden recording devices that provided the final capitalist-industrial touch—supervision.

What makes the work most factorylike, though, is the intense Taylorization imposed by the companies. An independent, or a person cleaning his or her own home, chooses where she will start and, within each room, probably tackles the most egregious dirt first. She may plan her work more or less ergonomically, first doing whatever can be done from a standing position and then squatting or crouching to reach the low-level dirt. But with the special "systems" devised by the cleaning services and supported by cleaning-as-exercise videos, there are no such decisions to make. In The Maids' "healthy touch" system, which is similar to what I saw of the Merry Maids' system on the training tape I was shown during my interview, the cleaning cycle is broken into four tasks—dusting, vacuuming, kitchens, and bathrooms—which are in turn divided among the team members. For each task, there is a designated room: dusting, vacuuming, and bathrooms—the three most time-consuming tasks—are the only decisions an employee has to make is which fluid and scrubbing instrument to deploy on which kind of surface; almost everything else has been choreographed in advance. When vacuuming, for example, we master bedroom, where dusting, with the first room left of the front door, then counterclockwise through the rooms coming left to right. When entering each room, you proceed from left to right and top to bottom, and the same rule applies to the order in which you clean: top to bottom, left to right. Deviations are subject to rebuke, as I discovered when a team leader caught me moving my arm from

right to left, then left to right, while wiping. Why I was told to do it this way I never found out.

It's not easy for anyone with extensive cleaning experience—and I packed myself in this category—to accept the loss of autonomy that comes with the system. First, because it would hardly have been practical to clean from left to right, it would have been necessary to lose count of the number of bedrooms and bathrooms and to forget which houses had been cleaned. Second, some of the houses were relatively clean when we started, at least by any normal standards, thanks probably to a housekeeper who kept things up between our visits. But the absence of visible dirt did not mean there was less work to do, for no surface could ever be neglected, so it was important to have "the system" to remind you of where you had been and what you had already "cleaned." No doubt the biggest advantage of the system, though, is that it helps you achieve the speed demanded by the company, which allots only so many minutes per house. After a week or two on the job, I found myself moving robotlike from surface to surface, grateful to have been relieved of the thinking process.

The irony, which I was often exhausted enough to derive a certain malicious satisfaction from, is that "the system" is not very sanitary. When I saw the training videos on "Kitchens" and "Bathrooms," I was at first baffled, and it took me several minutes to realize why. There is no water, or almost no water, involved. I had been taught to clean by my mother, a compulsive housekeeper who employed water so hot you needed rubber gloves to get into it and in such Niagaralike quantities that most microbes were probably crushed by the force of it before the soap suds had a chance to rupture their cell walls. But germs are never mentioned in the videos provided by The Maids. Our antagonists existed entirely in the visible world—soap scum, dust, counter crud, dog hair, stains, and smears—and were attacked by damp rag or, in hardcore cases, by a scouring pad. We scrubbed only to remove impurities that might be detectable to a customer by hand or by eye; otherwise our only job was to wipe. Nothing was ever said, in the videos or in person, about the possibility of transporting bacteria, by rag or by hand, from bathroom to kitchen or even from one house to the next. Instead, it is the "cosmetic touches" that the videos emphasize and to which my trainer continually directed my eye. Fluff out all throw pillows and arrange them symmetrically. Brighten up stainless steel sinks with baby oil. Leave all spice jars, shampoos, etc., with their labels facing outward. Comb out the fringes of Persian carpets with a rake. Use the vacuum to create a special, fernlike pattern in the carpet. The loose ends of toilet paper and paper towel rolls have to be given a special fold. Finally, the house is sprayed with the service's signature air freshener—redolent, in our case, "baby fresh" in the case of the Mini Maids.

When I described the "methods" employed to housecleaning expert Cheryl Mendelson, she was incredulous. A rag moistened with disinfectant will not get a countertop clean, she told me, because most disinfectants are inactivated by contact with organic matter—i.e., dirt—so their effectiveness declines with each swipe of the rag. What you need is a detergent and hot water, followed by a rinse. As for floors, she judged the amount of water we used—some half of a small bucket—to be grossly inadequate, and, in fact, the water I wiped around on floors was often an unsavory gray. I also ran The Maids cleaning methods by Don Aslett, author of numerous books on cleaning technique and self-styled "number one cleaner in America." He was hesitant to criticize The Maids directly, perhaps because he's, as he told me he is, a frequent speaker at conventions of cleaning service franchise holders, but he did tell me how he would clean a countertop: first, spray it thoroughly with all-purpose cleaner, then let it sit for three to four minutes of "full time," and finally wipe it dry with a clean cloth. Merely wiping the surface with a damp cloth, he said, just spreads the dirt around. But the point at The Maids, apparently, is not to clean so much as it is to create the appearance of having been cleaned, not to sanitize but to create a kind of stage setting for family life. And the stage setting Americans seem to prefer is sterile only in the metaphorical sense of like a motel room or the fake interiors in which soap operas and sitcoms take place.

But even ritual work takes its toll on those assigned to perform it. Turnover

A THOUSAND MYRIADS OF SOLIPSISMS, OF SOLIPSISMS AND SOLIPSISMS, THRIVE IN THE HOUSE WHEN THE SERVANT IS HIDDEN AND WHERE THE LIVE-IN IS WORE

TREKKING THE CITY OF LIGHT

Exorbitantly abroad with Mademoiselle du Pamplemousse

By James McManus

As we know, adventure travel is for neither the light of wallet nor the tender of foot. Lewis and Clark had a presidential letter of unlimited credit to help them stay the course to Cape Disappointment. Teddy Roosevelt's and Ernest Hemingway's safaris cost medium-size fortunes, allowing these glamorous sportsmen to bring back impressive numbers of hides and stuffed heads, not to mention provocative (in some cases, posthumous) accounts of exotic natives and landscapes, mind-bending amoebic dysentery, the occasional laughing hyena. Neil Armstrong had NASA behind him. And Reinhold Messner's more austere conquests of all fourteen 8,000-meter peaks have cost him six toes and a brother but have earned him the awe of his peers and the right to wax thanatological. "Death through exhaustion," he surmises, "is—like death through freezing—a pleasant one."

The common folk, too, have lately been flocking in Gore-Tex and khaki to the earth's far-flung wonders. Women have conquered the great peaks and rivers, and even I, at age forty-eight, scaled the Towers of Paine and ran the Double Drop of the Selway. In an era of guided treks and discounted airfares, however, intercontinental travel loses much of its cachet when too many groundlings begin to afford it. McMurdo Sound? Papua New Guinea? The moon? We've been there and done that. And siege-style expeditions, we hear, are so declasse, better to go in small groups or solo. These days we pack Canons instead of Mannlichers, bioSUPPE instead of buckskin, and subscribe to *Outside* instead of the slightly less PC *White Hunter*, but the principles of adventure travel remain the same: we want to prove our womanor manhood in precarious but picturesque settings out of reach of the stiffs or the riffraff. Negotiating the Bio-Bio or Zambezi involves permits and visas and shots, risks loss of limb, and costs plenty. Ditto Ferrari's test track in Fiorano. Ascending K2 can cost 2K per diem, not to mention one's health and/or sanity, and the hard part is getting back down. Meanwhile weather tourists pay handsomely to be ushered into the paths of hurricanes and tornadoes. "I don't want to use the word 'sexual,'" one confesses, "but there's something about the process of a hurricane that really appeals to me. You can see it coming, you can feel it building, you can put yourself in as much danger as you want."



It was in much the same spirit that last July my wife, Jennifer, and I ventured forth on what many aficionados of the haut tasme consider the ultimate, even the downright reckless, in adventure travel: Paris with a very small child. Eight days shy of eleven months, our daughter, Beatrice, was crawling and able to walk only when clutching our index fingers. Although her vocabulary consisted of less than five words, she leveled in the power of language by shouting pronouncements at the top of her lungs. She was also in diapers, with zero interest in French architecture or cuisine, unable even to feed herself. And her mother was pregnant again. So all of this stood in our favor. We launched the expedition sans

James McManus's most recent books are Great American, *a collection of poems, and* Going to the Sun, *a novel.*

parks on which it was legal for infants (or anyone) to crawl, and the ubiquitous [illegible] potentially lethal to infants. Our ad[illegible] that [illegible] though we'd [illegible] bottles, few of the others [illegible] was accustomed to would be [illegible] available. With possible allergic or oth[illegible] reactions [illegible] prepared to depart with high hopes.



Yet in spite of our lust to be tested, we [illegible] last-minute concession [illegible] and into the Hilton on Avenue de Suffren, [illegible] Steps from the Eiffel Tower and the Bir-Hakeim metro stop, the hotel was [illegible] with air conditioning, cable, complimentary buffet breakfasts, an [illegible] and in each of the elevators. By the standards established [illegible] Bea's backpack with [illegible] crossbar and [illegible] NEWTON [illegible] and Elmore thought to bespeak "an unintrepid softness of purpose." Worse, the flagrantly English-speaking staff allowed us to fill Bea's [illegible] croissants and mini-wheels of Baby

[illegible] even to stash yogurt and fruit [illegible] our Tupperware. Jennifer and I pe[illegible] ourselves that such shirkin[illegible] was [illegible] Lord, at what we saved [illegible] breakfasts and lunches was spent on [illegible] dinner or two, where the De[illegible] greet Difficulty in Dining with Di[illegible] nity, would compensate for the Hilton [illegible] unscrubbed perks. Plus wherever w[illegible] dined, we still had to spend half [illegible] time retrieving foodstuffs and napkin[illegible] and toys whipped by Mademoiselle d[illegible] Pamplemousse over her shoulder[illegible] which by set menus respectable [illegible] of 6.

When circumstances forced us t[illegible] consume *dejeuner* in brasseries or cafés[illegible] we limited ourselves to a spartan vari[illegible]ety of salads with french fries, ossified [illegible] duck with french fries, tripe wit[illegible] french fries, and burgers with frenc[illegible] fries. Mademoiselle du Pamplemousse[illegible] for her part, scarfed applesauce, grape[illegible] fruit, and bananas mashed into yogurt[illegible] with french fries. And although the [illegible] appeared on virtually every menu, a[illegible] three of us managed, we think, to avoi[illegible] french fries with burgers served *oeuf à cheval*.

Yet we still were determined to sub[illegible]ject ourselves to a genuine 10-rate[illegible] meal, the sort of experience usuall[illegible] reserved for those near suicidal "thin[illegible] air" fanatics who can give less inse[illegible]cure adventurers a bad name. In my[illegible] case, it was sampling the *degustation* menu of Les Olivades while taking[illegible] turns holding our daughter. Upping[illegible] the ante still further, we dined there on[illegible] only our second foray from base camp[illegible] when acclimatization was far from[illegible] complete. Grouchy and disoriented[illegible] we even requested a high chair, which[illegible] the earringed maître d', already ruffled[illegible] by the appearance of our so-called par[illegible]ty of three, was desolated to inform us[illegible] would be *impossible*. So far, so good[illegible] After hearing the specials recited in[illegible] lusty French while spooning mashed[illegible] peas into Mademoiselle du Pample[illegible] mousse, Jennifer made her selections: [illegible] tomato and basil soup Provençal, tuna [illegible] encrusted with sesame seeds and gin[illegible]ger, eggplant caviar. Already salivating [illegible] at the ordeal a *dégustation* menu sure[illegible]ly held in store, I swept with my shoe[illegible] a few shards from the flute of 1988 J. de [illegible] Telmont that the Mademoiselle had [illegible] just swiped to the floor. Watching the [illegible] sweep up the rest and then mop,

kissed Pamplemousse's sweet forehead and naively called for another.

It came. I sipped just as a cherubic, dimpled tyke grabbed the neck of the replacement flute and out splashed more vile effervescence. I swallowed. The petite room was eye-stingingly saturated with piquant aromas of *[illegible] au romarin*, wet collie, and myriad Marlboro Lights, which we later discovered have become *de rigueur* in *salles de Rive Gauche*. Clutching my thirsty daughter, who wanted to wash down her peas with what was left of the *garçon*'s beer, I squinted and coughed my way through seven superb little *plats*, all prepared in person by owner-chef Elora Mikula. Her waitstaff further cooperated by treating us like the breeders we were, though relatively speaking it was nothing too harsh. (I happen to teach at an avant-garde art school.) They deigned to fill a bottle with Oil and provided with minimal grousing a bowl of mashed potatoes, then neglected to charge us for butter. Yet our mettle was most thrillingly tested by the neutral glances and slightly raised eyebrows directed our way; these while childfree diners got hearty smiles and table-side repartee. Total points for this meal: 109. We virtually skipped in a drizzle back to the Hilton that evening, drunk on our debasement and otherness.

Even after further acclimatizing, we found Paris an embarrassment of riches in the way of stress on a parent's patience and cardiovascular fitness. On the bunny-hill end of the spectrum, one must withstand the hawkers of windup birds, demon raccoons, miniature King Tuts and Eiffel Towers. Somewhat more challenging are the ratuous caricatures proffered at "half-price special discount for cute cute cute daughter. You want?" Lingering later over espresso and a *Herald Tribune* while subduing said daughter's back-arching tantrum elevated my heart rate impressively (a 9 of 7), especially when at the end of a slack nylon leash a Pomeranian bitch sauntered by, pausing to sneeze on my ankle.

Other tribulations included toilets needing two or three flushes, toilets with locked doors requiring coins you don't have, free toilets consisting of holes in the floor between heel rests. [illegible] a few of the more frustrated while [illegible] the Mademoiselle on my "incubator," from which perch she tested her own dexterity and balance by yanking my hair from its roots. Even back in the Hilton's well-appointed marble bathroom, things could be reassuringly exergonic. Bathing an obdurate, slippery twenty-three-pound mermaid in a porcelain sink—to my knowledge, *TWITCH* has never even rated this wet little parcel of calvary. And speaking of unrated, weather tourists turned on by storms should take note: the chance of a hurricane reaching Paris is [illegible] approximately [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]



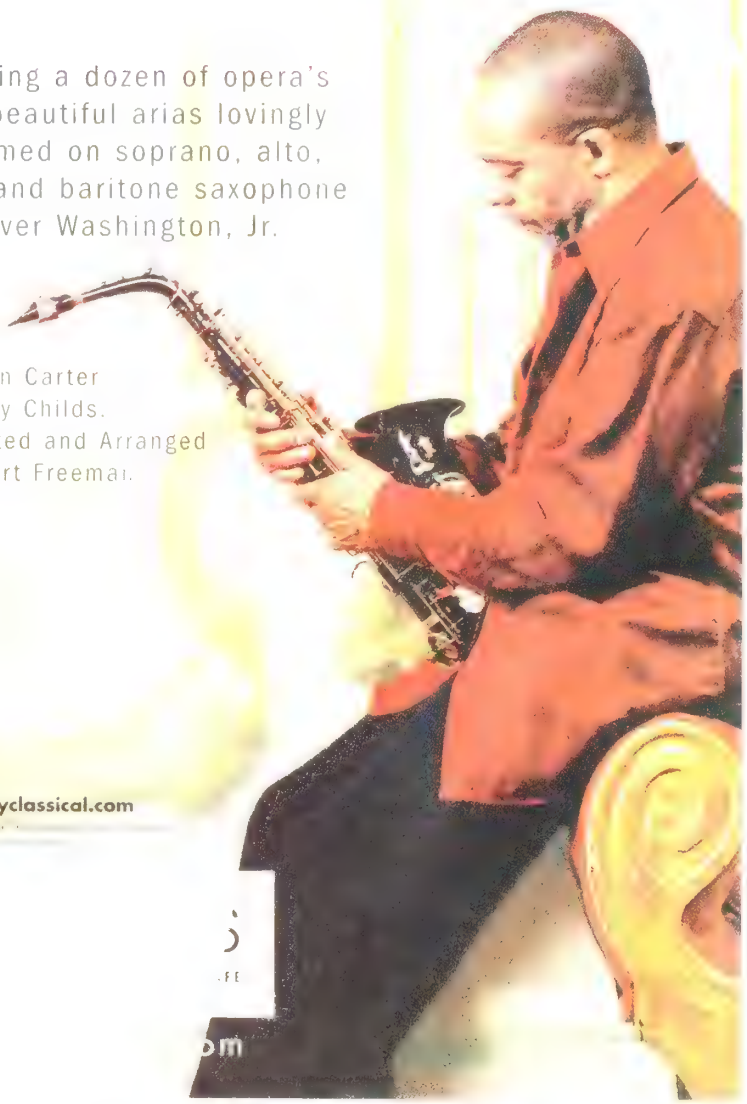
Rue Servandoni and dining every night at the Three Musketeers. Once there, encouraged and amused by the pretentious menu, I ordered the "Escargots, Mère," looking up to watch her chatting to a regular in the back of the bar and delighting in admiring miniature boats among the baby ducks [illegible] much as [illegible]

[illegible] Jogger, she rolled a ball back and [illegible] the Rodin Museum [illegible] the Invalides [illegible] the Boulevard [illegible] the Jogger

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[illegible] the Lutetian at the [illegible] to look [illegible] the three-star [illegible] still and chew appreciate the Eiffel Tower [illegible] Notre-Dame [illegible] the Louvre [illegible] through the plane trees, yet lacy and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] It was something.

On the final morning of our adventure, [illegible] the menu at the Coupole [illegible] the three of the Cimetière du Montparnasse, we happened [illegible] the memorial models for Vladimir and Estragon, in that quintessential Parisian cliché, *Le Attendant Godot*.

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

Samuel Beckett
1906–1989

The play was also written, of course, by this transplanted Irishman, inspired as he was by the 150-mile trek from Lyon to Roussillon in 1942 that he and Suzanne undertook to make on foot, moving only at night in order to evade the SS, who had already arrested [illegible] the other members of their cell of Resistance fighters. Now *that*, albeit [illegible] was adventure travel. At the time of their meeting in 1938, Sam had been a drunken, virtually unpublishable vagabond. It was Suzanne who [illegible] him back to health and [illegible] sobriety, after he was stabbed [illegible] at the Rue de la Pompe by the Avenue Foch pimp known as Le Général. [illegible] three blocks from [illegible] Avenue Foch and just around the corner from the Cruchy Trocadéro [illegible] Right Bank [illegible] Eiffel Tower [illegible] the left.

Was Pamplemousse impressed by [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

noon wind sprints and weights, she's been casting a cool eye on quokka.com, the *IWTC II* newsletter, and *Outside*, even poring over my back issues of *White Hunter* for point-rich endeavors. Right now she seems to be leaning toward the Karakoram Range—either a steep slog up through the blizzards of Rakaposhi or a Grade VII technical assault on the Nameless Tower, where internally cold and hot air keeps getting thinner and thinner. She has even proposed summiting both in five days, with neither guides nor supplemental oxygen, pushing Beatrice and Grace in the Twinner. ■

April Index Sources

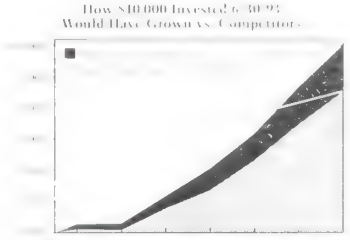
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A	V	E	R	S	I	O	N	I	L	S	A
L	Y	R	E	H	A	X	G	A	T	T	G

NOTES FOR "PLAYFAIR SQUARE"

The key word is [illegible]. At fifteen letters, the longest word in English in which no letter recurs. (Source: Word Circus, *by Richard Lederer*)

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 1. hedonism*, 7. hidden in reverse, 10. two rings, 11. [illegible], 13. hidden, 14. [illegible], 16. a-Z-etc.*; 17. e(Mig)re-E; 19. O-b(L)ong; 20. in(flu)X; 24. B.A.(O)-B.A.-B.S.; 25. soil (rev.), 27. th(ur)longs, 29. homonym, 30. [illegible] version, 31. [illegible], 32. [illegible]nym, 33. remotely.

DOWN: 1. reversal, 2. qui(//)t cal(l), 3. U-turn, 4. cho(p)-ice, 5. [illegible] to, hidden, 6. p.u.k, 8. undergoing, going under, 9. E-ister-n, 12. [illegible], 15. "stock[illegible]" around two "O"s, 18. or(but)al; 19. c(ommittee)-ash-box; 21. O.A.-fish; 22. pun; 23. G-lo-ar(rev.); 26. agha, hidden; 28. [illegible].

REVISING VIETNAM, AGAIN

A new history argues that Kennedy might have pulled us out

By James William Gibson

[illegible]

American Tragedy: Kennedy, Johnson, and the Origins of the Vietnam War by David Kaiser. Harvard University Press. [illegible] 576 pages. $29.95.

The April marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall of Saigon offered opportunities to be stunned by televised images of desperate Americans and Vietnamese lining up [illegible] to be lifted from the embassy roof to helicopters that then flew out to waiting offshore. There, crewmen pushed the emptied aircraft into the sea, since [illegible] Communist troops mopped up as the South Vietnamese [illegible] government collapsed. Predictably, [illegible] that the Vietnam War was a mistake and that the U.S. involvement [illegible] Vietnam.

Within a few years, however, the [illegible] was reopened, and examination [illegible] of Vietnam, which [illegible] the United States in the 1960s, became a way of addressing multiple political and cultural crises. [illegible] military units or overt military force. We were denied our traditional post-war celebrations of the warrior, affirmation of our virtue and masculine power. Meanwhile, social movements from civil rights and ethnic nationalism to feminism and environmentalism gained strength as the crisis of authority in the culture spread.

The political reaction was one of fear. Ronald Reagan's election in 1980 signaled [illegible] a return to the golden pre-Vietnam era of the 1950s. A $2 trillion military buildup began, and once again covert action and military [illegible] became favored foreign policy [illegible] to contain the Soviet Union's "evil empire." America refought Vietnam in films and pulp novels and paramilitary magazines. In these mythical new wars, we defeated Communist [illegible] and regained [illegible] victory in [illegible] the shame of defeat. [illegible] culture, together with the massive military buildup, culminated in the Gulf War, which seemed to trying to redo Vietnam—replacing defeat [illegible] with victory—became palpable.

Today, the Cold War appears to be [illegible]. The United States finds itself in the unprecedented position of being the world's only remaining superpower. Still, [illegible] War teaches a [illegible] lesson [illegible] the subject is not merely a subfield that [illegible] foreign specialists but part of an ongoing, if intermittent, debate on what kind of country the United States was and should become.

Most recently, some highly visible figures are claiming that the war was not lost at all but represented only a lost battle in a larger conflict—capitalism v. communism—that the United States and its allies have won. Thus *Time* magazine editor Walter Isaacson could go so far as to say, on a recent episode of *Charlie Rose*, that we should "look at Vietnam, now . . . as part of a continuum. Some involvements worked. Some were ill-conceived. But the basic premise was right. And it turned out to be successful." Isaacson's position is but one example of the neoconservative attempt to revise away our misjudgments and defeat in Vietnam, another being Michael Lind's new book, *Vietnam: The Necessary War*, in which he argues that America had no choice but to escalate its involvement in Vietnam in the 1960s "in order to defend [its] credibility . . . as a superpower."

Now David Kaiser, who teaches [illegible] in the Strategy and Policy Department at the Naval War College, has entered the conversation with *American Tragedy*, a new version of the classic liberal account of the war. Kaiser attempts to argue that the conflict represented a series of well-intentioned mistakes made by the political elite, most notably Eisenhower, who formulated the containment policies that committed us to action in Vietnam, and Lyndon Johnson, who embraced those policies. In the middle stands John F. Kennedy, who "questioned whether Indochina was an appropriate place for the United States to fight," and who in Kaiser's view might have gotten us out, given more time. Kaiser begins with Kennedy's ascent to power in 1961 and ends in the summer of 1965, by which time Johnson's administration had publicly committed ground-combat forces to South Vietnam, begun the bombing of the north, and privately decided that the United

tates would continue to intensify the
at until the North Vietnamese rec-
gnized that they could not win. Kaiser
ent years analyzing formerly classified
ocuments and promotes this work as
he first treatment based upon a near-
complete documentary record."

Shaping Kaiser's approach is the idea
at Kennedy and his administration
epresented the coming to power of
he "GI generation." First employed by
istorians William Strauss and Neil
owe, the term refers to those men,
orn between 1901 and 1924, who
erved in World War II. Molded by
he successful war effort, their strengths
e said by Kaiser to have included "an
xemplary willingness to tackle diffi-
ult and costly tasks, a faith in the in-
itutions of the government
... and a relentless optim-
ism." These strengths had
oncomitant weaknesses,
articularly "an unwilling-
ess to question basic as-
mptions, or to even admit
he possibility of failure."
irtually all of Kennedy's
ajor foreign-policy ap-
ointees — Vice President
ohnson, Secretary of De-
ense Robert S. McNama-
a, Secretary of State Dean
usk, National Security Ad-
iser McGeorge Bundy, and
everal of the Joint Chiefs
f Staff — were members of
he GI generation. Kaiser
nds it logical to conclude
at they "never questioned
he assumptions of the Pen-
agon and State Depart-
ent, and supported inter-
ention in Southeast Asia
om 1961 on."

Chief among these assumptions were
at Communism was a monolithic po-
tical entity and that the "domino the-
ry" correctly described Cold War
eopolitics. Kaiser traces the origins of
hese ideas to the Eisenhower years,
nd it was, in fact, Eisenhower who
opularized the term "domino theory."
n April 1954, in reference to a ques-
on about the strategic importance of
dochina, Eisenhower said: "You have
row of dominoes set up, and you
nock over the first one, and what will
appen to the last one is the certainty
hat it will go over very quickly. So
you could have a beginning of a disin-
tegration." To those who subscribed to
this theory, intervening and, later, es-
calating military forces in Vietnam
made perfect sense.

When Kennedy took office in 1961,
he discovered just how dramatic an es-
calation the Eisenhower Administra-
tion had been contemplating. National
Security Council policy documents
from 1956 plainly stated that "the na-
tional security of the United States
would be endangered by Communist
domination of mainland Southeast
Asia." At the same time, the United
States declared in its secret plans that
"nuclear weapons will be used in gen-
eral war and in military operations short
of general war." Kaiser concludes that



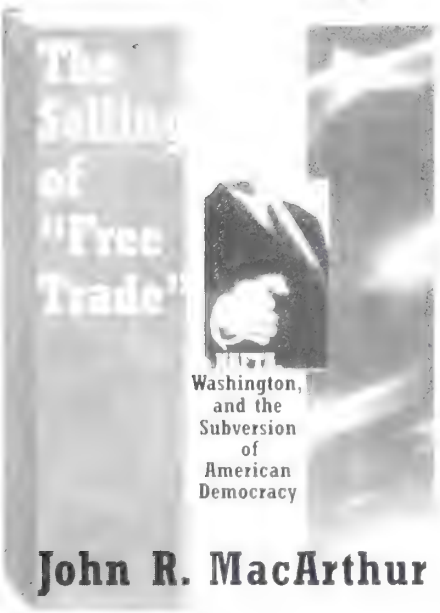
the Eisenhower Administration's plans
to intervene in Southeast Asia "could
not be separated in practice from its
reliance upon nuclear weapons."

By placing Kennedy squarely with-
in this context, Kaiser makes him ap-
pear to have been a very different kind
of Cold Warrior: a cautious, reluctant
one. In March 1961 the Joint Chiefs of
Staff recommended sending 60,000
U.S. soldiers — with air power and, if
need be, nuclear weapons — to western
Laos, in order to shore up the crumbling
Royal Laotian regime. Kennedy re-
fused, declaring that sending U.S.
troops might lead to intervention by
the Vietminh (the Communist Chi-
cong) and Communist China. Instead,
he reluctantly agreed to a neutral
government in Laos that [illegible], while
still in office, Secretary of Defense Mc-
Namara rejected [illegible]. Again
Kennedy refused, and in July the United
States signed the Geneva Accord on
Laotian Neutrality. As an example of
Kennedy's caution, Kaiser also points to
the Cuban Missile Crisis of October
1962, when Kennedy rejected propos-
als for bombing the island and mount-
ing an invasion there.

But Kaiser's portrayal of a
Kennedy who stood alone and
held back a nuclear-minded mil-
itary lacks balance, in that it neglects
a very different dynamic
then operating within the
national security establish-
ment. Although it is cer-
tainly true that the Eisen-
hower Administration
integrated nuclear weapons
into virtually all of its war
plans, many members of the
national security establish-
ment, both civilian and mil-
itary, considered reliance on nuclear weapons to be deeply flawed strategy.
Once the Soviet Union had
nuclear warheads, and mis-
siles and planes capable of
striking Europe and the
United States, battlefield
use of nuclear weapons on
the part of the United
States would have threat-
ened immediate escalation
to global nuclear war.

Consequently, by the
late 1950s, political and military the-
orists started to develop theories of
"limited war." Kaiser fails to mention
Henry Kissinger's famous and influen-
tial 1957 treatise, *Nuclear Weapons and
Foreign Policy*, in which he wrote that
"limited war has become the form of
conflict which enables us to derive the
greatest strategic advantage from our
industrial potential. ... A war of attri-
tion is the one war the Soviet bloc
could not win." Kissinger was not alone
in this thinking. Walt Rostow, an ad-
viser to Kennedy, also called for "war
with just enough violence to be good
sport" in his 1960 book, *The Stages*

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HILL AND WANG
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Kaiser's work, which [illegible] shows "unconventional warfare" [illegible] could have succeeded further. No set of techniques could reverse the political insurgency in Vietnam; techniques could not create loyalty to Diem, and no other cohesive political force—no "third way"—emerged. In truth, the only solution was to recognize that the war had been misguided, that it was lost, and to make accommodations with the National Liberation Front, the political arm of the Vietcong. This recognition came too late.

Toward the end of *American Tragedy*, Kaiser reveals his profound worries over the effects of the protests unleashed by the Vietnam War and of other social movements of that era. "The disintegration of the civic order that the war had begun still continues," he writes, "and seems to be leading inexorably to some new and unforeseeable crisis." But if protesting the Vietnam War after it had gotten fully under way was wrong, was there any right way by which the tragedy could have been avoided? Perhaps, argues Kaiser: if Kennedy had lived. The romantic aura of Camelot permeates *American Tragedy*. At one point Kennedy is described as a charming, well-rounded champion, a man "who worked and played hard, taking a nap and a swim every afternoon and spending his evenings socializing." (In contrast, Kaiser describes the rest of Kennedy's administration as "workaholics.") And such a cool character, too: "Kennedy's detachment, curiosity, and quick intelligence allowed him to deal rapidly with a variety of issues as President." If only Kennedy had not been assassinated, Kaiser suggests, one day, refreshed from his swim, his nap, and [illegible] early afternoon," he might have withdrawn U.S. forces from Vietnam.

In October 1963, Kennedy [illegible] to characterize Vietnam as "vital" to U.S. security, calling it "a major interest of the United States, which [illegible] represents." Admitting that the United States would [illegible] to preserve it." But Kennedy's semantic quibble offers no assurance that [illegible] involvement, given his repeated public [illegible] belief in developing counterinsurgency and limited conventional warfare as tools of Cold War policy.

Too much of Kaiser's argument for Kennedy, as a potential savior, amounts to special pleading. The reporter James Reston remembered that JFK referred to Vietnam in 1961 as the place "to demonstrate our firmness" to the Soviets, but the columnist Arthur Krock remembers him saying something different around the same time. Kaiser concludes that Reston must be wrong. JFK approved the drafting of a cable that, in his own words, "suggested the coup" against Diem, but later, Kaiser tells us, the president privately expressed regret. We are told that Kennedy "believed the assurances of his trusted subordinates McNamara and Taylor that [the war] was going well," but at other moments, the president is presented as actively resisting the hawkishness of his advisers. So would he have gone on being duped, or would his skepticism have led him to avoid the mistakes made by Johnson? Kaiser wants to have it both ways.

That *American Tragedy* portrays Kennedy as a hero, struck down before he could save us from the war in Vietnam, enhances the book's theatricality. This newest revision of the story of the war has given *American Tragedy* considerable prepublication appeal. Otherwise, despite Kaiser's claims to have uncovered vital documents, neither these documents nor the book as a whole alter what has long been known about the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. It was almost thirty years ago that Daniel Ellsberg released the *Pentagon Papers*, making available hundreds of classified memos and studies illustrating how officials conceptualized Vietnam and how they thought they would win.

The truth is that Kaiser's infatuation with Kennedy has moved the debate over Vietnam backward rather than forward. John Kenneth Galbraith, an adviser to both Kennedy and Johnson who eventually broke from Johnson over Vietnam, spoke of Kaiser's book last November during an address he gave at the LBJ Library. "Nuclear weapons were freely proposed," he said. "One reads with relief and gratitude of the presidential resistance, that of Kennedy in particular but also of LBJ."

to such reference to [illegible] appeal in Kaiser's book, but Galbraith's speech [illegible] November 7. A week later, former Senator and 1972 presidential candidate George McGovern wrote an op-ed piece for the paper on Johnson's resistance to the war, in which he cited Galbraith's speech. The piece concluded, "If it had been up to Lyndon Johnson, we would not have come in to Vietnam."

By this time Henry Kissinger had begun to feel left out. On the same broadcast of *Charlie Rose* in which Walter Isaacson appeared, Kissinger divulged how bad he felt that Kennedy and Johnson—"who got us into" Vietnam—were off the hook, while liberals like Galbraith were still blaming members of the Nixon Administration, "who got us out."

Thus Kaiser's revisionist view of Kennedy takes its place in a larger public discourse. The liberal side is replete with fantasies of redemption. Vietnam just "happened", no one was really responsible. "Each step led only to the next," Arthur Schlesinger Jr. wrote in *The Bitter Heritage*, in 1966, until we found ourselves in "a land war in Asia—a war which no President, including President Johnson, desired or intended." Similarly, Robert McNamara endlessly repeats, in his 1999 book *Argument Without End*, that Vietnam was just a sad misunderstanding, a series of mistakes and miscommunications. And from the right-leaning camp—most strikingly in Colonel Harry Summers's *On Strategy*—has come the refrain that we lost the war only because liberals would not let us win. So for the past twenty-five years our "debate" on Vietnam has been reduced to a prolonged effort at making the war go away, either by eschewing responsibility for it or by imagining a happier, victorious ending.

As we know, neither Kennedy, Johnson, nor Nixon stopped the United States from going to war in Southeast Asia. To the contrary, Kennedy and Johnson escalated the war, and Nixon continued it at a high pitch for years. Vietnamese Communist forces defeated the United States and the South Vietnamese government, first in 1963–64 and again [illegible] the year-plus-long counteroffensive and land mine deaths from 1965 to 1973. The U.S. defeat was ratified in the 1973 Paris Peace Accords.

It is time to acknowledge more than our defeat, however, namely, that the trouble in Southeast Asia did not end with our involvement there. We Americans are famously provincial in our view of international affairs, often imagining another country's history as relevant only insofar as it touches on our own. But throughout Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia people continue to be killed and wounded every day by the war's unexploded munitions and land mines. From 1985 through 1994, 474 people were killed and another 449 wounded in one Vietnamese province alone. Surviving victims are paid a pension of about $2.50 per month. And although de-mining operations have removed 90,000 mines and 450,000 pieces of unexploded ordnance in Cambodia, some 6 million mines and untold ordnance remain.

Vietnam also suffers the effects of dioxin poisoning. Air Force planes dumped 18 million gallons of herbicide containing dioxins on some 6 million acres—about one seventh of the total land area. Vietnamese health officials claim that Agent Orange is responsible for killing or injuring 400,000 people and contributing to birth defects in 500,000 children.

The question is not whether the United States has enough money to cleanse Southeast Asia of these weapons and to fund decent studies on dioxin contamination. The Congressional Budget Office now predicts that the federal treasury will reap a $1.9 trillion surplus over the next decade. But do we possess the maturity to bring the Vietnam War to a conclusion different from the ones we keep imagining for it? Certainly the Vietnamese hope so. If we accept our responsibility to help, if we finally do something in Southeast Asia of which we can be proud, then perhaps we will no longer feel the need to imagine JFK or Johnson as a savior, or to fantasize that we could have won the war, or that we did win it. And a serious historian such as David Kaiser will no longer feel compelled to dress up his scholarship in political romance. Maybe then the war will be over. ■

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THE RABBIT-PEN

By Sherwood Anderson

[illegible] path [illegible] walking in the garden [illegible] Harkness and imagining marriage, came upon a [illegible] pen. They were blind; they were hair- [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the pen [illegible] the huge fellow again and again.

The man who had written two suc- [illegible] [illegible] the path [illegible] and the furious little mother struggling in the [illegible] white. He was afraid that the [illegible] the struggle. A cry of sympathy broke [illegible]

[illegible] heels. Turning, she flung him through [illegible] pen with [illegible] child's play- [illegible] and [illegible] the shrubbery be- [illegible] the path.

Fordyce stood in the path, looking at the little dead rabbit in the center of the pen. He thought that it should be taken away, and wondered how it might be done. He tried to think of himself reaching through the little [illegible] and taking the lit- tle blue-black dead thing into his hand; but the housekeeper, coming from the child's playhouse with a child's shov- el in her hand, reached into the pen and threw the body over the shrub- bery into the vegetable-garden beyond.

Fordyce followed her—the free- walking, straight-backed Gretchen— [illegible] at the end of the gravel path. He heard her talking, in her bold, quick way, to Hans, the stable- man. [illegible] about [illegible] Hans spoke. He sat in a chair by the stable door, watching her [illegible]

Hans, the stableman, finished the [illegible] [illegible] put fresh, new straw. Fordyce won- [illegible] [illegible] Hans spoke. She [illegible]

and yet, no doubt like [illegible] she [illegible] nothing of rabbits," he thought, [illegible] wonder.

Hans came back into the stable [illegible] began again polishing the trimmings [illegible] harness hanging on the wall. "I was trying to kill the young males," he explained in broken English.

Fordyce told Harkness of the [illegible] of the rabbit pen. "She was magnif- cent," he said. "She saved all of that new life while I stood by, trembling and impotent. I went up to my room and sat thinking of her. She should be spending her days caring for new life, making it fine and purposeful, and not be counting sheets and wringing wa- the iceman for an old, worn-out new paper back like you."

Joe Harkness had laughed. "Sam old sentimental, susceptible Frank," he [illegible] about every woman you see, but keep- ing well clear of them, just the same."

Sitting on the wide veranda in the late afternoon, Fordyce read [illegible] book. He was alone, [illegible] own book. As he read, he wondered that somany thousands of people had [illegible] and appreciate it. Between [illegible] he became entangled in [illegible] cies that never became realities. He imagined himself the proud husband

Gretchen, the housekeeper

Fordyce was always being a proud sband. Scarcely a week passed with it the experience. It was satisfying nd complete. He felt now that he had ever been prouder husband to a more eautiful or more capable woman than retchen. Gretchen was complete he was a Brunnhilde. Her fine face, rowned by thick, smooth hair, and er quiet, efficient manner, brought a rill of pride. He saw himself getting ff the train in the evening at some Chicago suburb and walking through he shady streets to the ame house where Gretchen waited at the oor.

Glancing up, his eyes ested on the wide emerld lawn. In the shrubery, Hans, the stableman, worked with a pair f pruning-shears. ordyce began thinking f the master of the ou:e and its mistress, uth—the brown-eyed, oft-voiced Ruth with he boyish freckles. Joe, omrade of the struggling newspaper days, as married to pretty uth and her fortune. id went off to meetings f directors in the city, as e had done this afteroon. "Good old Joe," hought Fordyce, with a ave of tenderness. "For im no more uncertainies, no more heartches."

From the nursery at he top of the house ame the petulant voics of the children. They ere refusing to be off to bed at the ommand of their mother, refusing to e quiet, as they had been refusing her ommands all afternoon. They romped nd shouted in the nursery, throwing hings about. Fordyce could hear the lear, argumentative voice of the oldr boy.

"Don't be obstinate, mother," said he boy; "we will be quiet after a while."

The man sitting on the veranda could picture the gentle mother. She would be standing in the doorway of the nursery—the beautiful children's room with the pictures of ships on the walls—and there would be the vague, baffled, uncertain look in her eyes. She would be trying to make herself severe and commanding, and the children would be defying her. The listening man closed his book with a bang. A shiver of impatience ran through him. "Damn!" he said, swiftly. "Damn!"

From below-stairs came the sharp, clicking sound of footsteps. A voice,



firm and purposeful, called up to the nursery. "Sshtuvig!" commanded the voice of Gretchen, the housekeeper.

Above stairs all became quiet. The mother, coming slowly down, joined Fordyce on the veranda. They sat together discussing books. They talked of the work of educators among children.

"I can do nothing with my own children," said Ruth Harkness. "They look to that Gretchen for everything."

In the hour before dinner Fordyce could hear the housekeeper moving about, up and down the stairs and in and out of the living-room; he could see her through the window and the open door. She went about silently, putting the house in order. Above in the nursery all was peace and quiet.

Fordyce stayed on as a guest at Cottesbrooke, finishing his third book. With him stayed Gretchen, putting the house in order for the winter; Harkness, with Ruth, the two boys, and the servants, had gone to the city home. It was autumn, and the brown leaves went dancing through the bare shrubbery on the lawn. In his overcoat Frank now sat on the veranda and looked at the hurrying leaves. He was being one of the leaves.

"I am dead and brown and without care, and that is how being blown by the wind across the dead grass," he told himself.

At the end of the veranda, near the carriage entrance, stood his trunk. His brown bag was by his feet.

Out through the door of the house came Gretchen. She stood by the railing at the edge of the veranda, talking. "I am not satisfied with this family," she said. "I shall be leaving them. There is too much money."

She turned, waving her hand and talking vehemently. "It is of no account to save," she declared. "I am best at the saving. In this house all summer I have made the butter for the table from cream that has spoiled. Things were wasted in the kitchen and I have stopped that. It has passed unnoticed. I know every sheet, every towel. Is it appreciated? Master, Harkness and mistress—they do not know that I know, and do not care. The sour cream

[illegible] stablemen about the doings of rabbits in pens, and it gets into my mind that [illegible] ley for you to drop letter-signing and come to dine with me while yet I am [illegible]

Next year February, with the snow lying piled along the edges of the city streets. Sitting at the office [illegible] Fordyce, looking through the window, [illegible] lonely.

Fordyce turned from the window to [illegible] the letters on the desk. "It is of no avail to look sternly and forbiddingly at me," he said. "I [illegible] I have had the luck I wrote at your house, and have money in my pocket. Now I will take you [illegible] and after the dinner [illegible] to-morrow. [illegible]

In the restaurant they had come to the oysters, and Harkness was talking of life in his house. He was talking intimately, as a man talks only to one who is near and dear to him.

"I have been unhappy," said Harkness. "A struggle has come on in which I have lost."

His friend said nothing. Putting down his cigar, he fingered the thin stem of the glass that sat before him.

"In Germany I engaged Gretchen," said Harkness, talking rapidly. "I got her for the management of our house and for the boys. They were unruly, and Ruth could do nothing with them. Also we thought it would be well for them to know the German language.

"In our house, after we got Gretchen, peace came. The boys stayed diligently at their lessons. When in the schoolroom at the top of the house they were unruly, Gretchen came to the foot of the stairs, '*Schweig*!' she shouted, and they were intent upon their lessons.

"In the house Gretchen went about quietly. She did the work of the house thoroughly. When I came home in the evening the toys of the children no longer were scattered about underfoot. They were gathered into the boxes put into the nursery for the purpose.

"Our two boys sat quietly with us at the evening meal. When they had been well-mannered they looked for approval to Gretchen, who talked to them in German. Ruth did not speak German. She sat at the table, looking at the boys and at Gretchen. She was unhappy in her own home, but I did not know why.

"One evening when the boys had gone up-stairs with Gretchen she turned to me, saying intensely, '*I hate* German!' I thought her over-tired. 'You should see a physician for the nerves,' I said.

"And then came Christmas. It was a German Christmas with German [illegible] and a tree for each of the boys. Gretchen and I had planned it one evening when Ruth was in bed with a headache.

"The gifts on our Christmas trees were magnificent. They were a surprise to me. Ruth and I had not believed in costly gifts, and now Ruth had loaded the trees with them. Th trees were filled with toys, costly m chanical toys for each of our two boy With them she had planned to w the boys.

"The boys were beside themselv with joy. They ran about the roo shouting. They played with the elal orate toys upon the floor.

"Ruth took the gifts from the tree In the shadow by the door stoo Gretchen. She was silent. When th boys got the packages from the tre they ran to her, shouting, '*Mach' a auf' Mach' es auf' Tante Gretchen*!'

"I was happy. I thought we wer having a beautiful Christmas. The an noyance I had felt at the magnificenc of Ruth's gifts passed away.

"And then, in one moment, th struggle that had smoldered under th surface of the lives of the two wome in my house burst forth. Ruth, my ge tle Ruth, ran out into the middle of th floor, shouting in a shrill, high voic 'Who is mother here? Whose childre are these?'

"The two boys clung to the dress Gretchen. They were frightened an cried. Gretchen went out of the roon taking them with her. I could hear he quick, firm footsteps on the stairs.

"Gretchen put the two boys int their white beds in the nursery. At he word they ceased weeping.

"In the center of the room they ha left, lighted only by the little electri bulbs in the branches of the Christ mas trees, stood Ruth. She stood in si lence, looking at the floor, and trem bling.

"I looked at the door through whic our boys had gone at the command o Gretchen. I did not look at Ruth. A flame of indignation burned in me. felt that I should like to take her by th shoulders and shake her."

Fordyce had never seen his friend s moved. Since his visit to Cottesbrooke he had been thinking of his old com rade as a man in a safe harbor—one peacefully becalmed behind the break water of Ruth and her fortune, passing his days untroubled, secure in his happiness.

"My Ruth is wonderful," declared Harkness, breaking in on these reflections. "She is all love and truth. To me

he had been more dear than life. We have been married all these years, and still like a lover I dream of her at night sometimes I get out of bed and I creep into her room, and, kneeling there in the darkness, I kiss the strands of her hair that lie loose upon the pillow.

"I do not understand why it is not with our boys as it is with me," he said, imply. "To myself I say, 'Her love should conquer all.'"

Before the mind of Fordyce was a different picture—the picture of a strong, straight-backed woman running down a gravel path to a wire rabbit-pen. He saw her reach through the door, and, taking the father rabbit by the ears, throw him through the window of the child's play-house. "She could settle the trouble in the rabbit's pen," he thought, "but this was another problem."

Harkness talked again. "I went to where Ruth stood trembling and took her in my arms," he said. "I made up my mind that I would send Gretchen back to Germany. It was my love for Ruth that had made my life. In a flash I saw how she had been crowded out of her place in her own home by that able, quiet, efficient woman."

Harkness turned his face away from the eyes of his friend. "She lay in my arms and I ran my hand over her hot little head," he said. "'I couldn't keep it back any longer, Joe, I couldn't help saying it,' she cried. 'I have been a child, and I have lost a fight. If you will let me, I will try now to be a woman and a mother.'"

Fordyce took his eyes from the face of his friend. For relief he had been feeding an old fancy. He saw himself walking up a gravel path to the door of a German house. The house would be in a village, and there would be formal flower-plots by the side of the gravel path.

"To what place in Germany did she go, this Gretchen?" he demanded.

Harkness shook his head. "She married Hans, the stableman, and they went away together," he said. "In my house the mechanical toys from the Christmas tree lie about underfoot. We are planning to send our boys to a private school. They are pretty hard to control."

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to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

—William Carlos Williams

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MY FATHER'S LEGION OF HONOR

A story of war

By Paul West

Soon after midnight, my father, ever the punctual sergeant, clambers out of his grave and totters off into No Man's Land with a lieutenant in tow. It is 1916 and the lieutenant is doing his captain's bidding. "I can't have a sergeant without a decoration," he tells the lieutenant. "Take him out there and bring back a hero. I'll do the rest." Off the two of them go into the sweet sapped smell of England tainted with sulfur, where the dead and maimed flout in shell holes and rats the size of dogs work on dead horses. It is no picnic, but they are not afraid: my father is a hardened soldier, a true tommy, one of the regiment called the Sherwood Foresters, named in honor of Robin Hood; and the lieutenant, an Oxford man who has read Herodotus, knows how the war settles down at night into an aural Bayeux tapestry of intermittent cries, bangs on tin trays, bits of broken accordion music and vague disembodied whistles, of man, bird or shell it is never known. He tells the intended brief recognition [illegible] "Tocsy") into the middle of nowhere and then a clatter return with the usual password uttered, Albion or Hovis Hovis, or Beecham's Cornes—and there is the merest gesture, a tattle back to camp.

Less than an hour later, my father returns without the lieutenant, but with his dog tag (at least that distant war's ruddy fiber disc, the equivalent). No one has heard gunfire or an exploding grenade, but the lieutenant has had the Herodotus knocked out of his skull by a sniper, and my father is feeling as if, as they say in the world of boxing, someone has belted him in the mighty with a low blow. He has presumably done nothing to earn a medal.

"A full account." The captain presses him. "Each and every detail. Did you fire back?"

No, my father did not, seeing nothing to shoot at, the flash had gone before the sound of the shot reached him, and of course they would kill an officer first. But did they spare sergeants anyway? He could not quite figure out the transnational politics of it all.

When a new lieutenant arrives, the captain says, my father will have to go again; he wants a sergeant decorated on the chest. It never occurs to him, my father muses, that I killed him—after all, why kill the witness to my own bravery? "Sorry, Sergeant," he hears. "You will have to wait your turn." His mind fills with [illegible] that he knows is not out there: commanding officer and N.C.O.s touring the shell holes to get the N.C.O. his medal because the captain wants it.

A week later, my father, Alfred (named for a Saxon king), heads out again, with Lieutenant Ainslie, i memory, I suppose, of Lieutenan Smethwick of Winchester and Ne College. They march, then trot, scuf fle around a bit, no thought stealth, hear the mud sucking a them, the rats on urgent involuntar errands, and the night breeze sough ing through abandoned war machin ery: canteens, cannons, machin guns, and ammunition boxes. The see a smashed bicycle, an arm, and inexplicably, a blazing fire in a brazie no doubt intended to draw sucker in. In a mood of terse bravado, the make water into the red core of it forcing the fluid from them with lit tle muscular pushes akin to orgasm No one shoots them; the observe could not be looking, no doubt re lieving himself elsewhere. My fathe broods on the simultaneity of ugl and lovely things, at least until th first shot cracks through the gloon and Lieutenant Ainslie falls agains the brazier, fly only half-buttoned, hi final cry that of a mauled wistiti. M father slouches home on his tummy pausing only once to fire severa rounds in the direction of the top pled brazier, still visible as he goes inching, yarding, his way over the sludge. Now he has another night t remember and tell his son about ove a map of France and Belgium, thei hands poised with little paper flags t pin into the landscape.

Then the captain, against his Calvinist will, begins to suspect my fa

er. Willing to let life be bleak so
g as it remains productive, he does
ot like to have his subalterns wasted,
or the energy of his N.C.O.'s. Per-
ps, he muses, he is wrong to insist on
decorated sergeant. Where did he
t such a dainty idea in the first place'
mmit, he could take the
perwork himself, but what
will do, being an obtuse
rson, is take the bloody
an out there himself and
ep an eye on him, ever be-
nd him, who knows the
ys of the night-stalking
oncommissioned officer
tter than most captains. It
ems preposterous to him to
k it again, but curiosity has
med in him, and he wants
know if he has to leave
e sergeant out there with a
ound through his head
ther than drag him back to
drumhead court-martial for
ter apted murder of an offi-
r. Actually, he could just
ke him out and shoot
m — what I, the sergeant's
n, know a later war calls a
agging, usually an officer
imped off by a grunt.

"Out again soon, ergeant."

"Why bother, sir." My ther says military polite- ess is verbal manicure; ou do it without having to ook.

"First dark night."

"Sah!" No click of heels, ut an efficient snap of lips below he aspirant's mustache.

Insolent brat, Captain Sykes- uchan decides as my father clears he tent flap, quite aware that my fa- her, mustache or no, is only nine- en years old, unlikely to have ever eard Puccini's *Kyrie for Tenor* or now that, in a sheet of postage amps, one crease along the perfora- ons is barely enough to make the ear run straight. Yes, he chides him- elf, I am testing him against the uchstones of beloved civilization. an one be anonymously caustic ith such fellows? They have no emories, have they? Do they know ow . . . becalmed and yet tousled the uillotined head looks? Certainly they do not know how to speak as if they have seen it all. Where is it that they install little mirrors in the outside doors to prove to roaming, visiting ghosts that they are really dead? Is there a military equivalent? It would be easier to have a dead



N.C.O. than all this worry about what has been going on out there. In Tibet they feed the dead to vultures. I am responsible for *too many men*. It never ends. Then why do I insist on a ribbon for this fellow? To make things neat and pretty. So long as you sit back, the need to pee remains frozen, but the instant you sit up and stand it becomes an impetuous thunderhead.

Captain Sykes-Buchan, who in his cups bellows that one day the young Huns will wear bloodred shoelaces, decides to go through with his original plan and its safety measures. The sergeant will go armed, of course, but in front by several yards into that grue- me- ow of the soul. Before e- ter I will tell him something perky, such as the fact that Mozart wrote such a quartet, perhaps the Nineteenth, often called "The Dissonant," and this will puzzle him, widening the gulf between us more than a bullet ever could. Strange how, in this appalling abyss of war, we worry ourselves sick with that nicely laundered extract called the battle ribbon: dainty and potent, honored by all. Whereas death, do they honor it, or Lieutenants Smethwick and Amslie, more than a tree? Who knows, this oaf may well be able to sing an aria or two out there before he dies, his tone imperfect but his aim toward God accurate. How many arias has God so far picked up? Burnt offerings? Is it true that we, the French, and the Belgians are fighting this war for art? Is it only art or beauty that sustains us, or the prevalence of marmalade at breakfast tables, an encrusted sticky knife scything letters open as if one could not wait to read them and so find the paper knife among the ruck on the embroidered cloth?

He feels his head belongs in too many worlds.

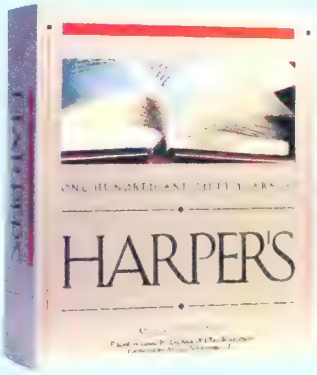
My father has banished the whole No Man's Land caper in favor of recombining the men in the machine-gun teams, too familiar with one another to be critical. This is his job, a lazy death always in mind, just around the corner, in a spiked helmet, proffered like a sausage on bayonet point.

Somehow, the pair of my father and his captain seems undoomed, perhaps because weightier in rank, perhaps because, although lieutenants are fair game, captains like sergeants are taboo, having a tougher cynicism to them, or any cynicism at all. Something incoherent, which might have pleased the captain as sounding like Gilbert and Sullivan,

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stories through my father's mind. Not [illegible] reading a [illegible] over the eyes of [illegible] and he wonders where it is and where the record he the lover of Gregorian chant a German orchestras (whenever hears either, not often). Out they Sykes-Buchan in the rear, sit do back to back, the captain facing ea and Blore two into the dark whatever is there, astounded at t screams of anguish they provok warm bruised slimy [illegible] out at a distance. This is sure worth a squib of ribbon, Sergea his mind at work on something p cultural is the sergeant a sergeant Is that the real meaning?

Again my father's disciplined sent: "Sah!"

"Say something different."

"You are right, sir. Sir."

"My wife says not. Have you ev pondered the unique privilege v have, Sergeant, of firing into t bloody dark and disembowelin some poor beggar for fun?"

"Out here, Captain," my father swers, "we're all on Queer Street like an opera that no man wants take his wife to and no wife h daughters." The captain is astounde

Now comes, I think, the source all my father's postwar martinet wi dom about the countervailing forc in the universe. If the captain ha been content to slaughter some u known member of the hoi polloi o there in the trenches' darknes would it have happened? If he h kept his mouth shut about th voluptuous privilege of maiming will, with no holds barred and n piper to pay (the a Scot), woul things have gone better? As *befa* my father begins, groping for th past tense of *befit*, then settling airil for *was befitting*, "there came a gre salvo of fire from the east, the direc tion he had been firing in, and muc of it went over us, lying there as if lion country, and lions ourselves, b one took him, perhaps two, and started digging into the mud for safe place, I with no Vickers ma chine gun to keep body and soul to gether but so far not hit. What bloody mess we brought about." H pauses not for breath but to place pin, like an acupuncturist hoverin

et a map of Mars. "There or there
eats." He covers it in darkness by
omorrow his eye patch and placing
reverentially over the town called
unt Lupe or something similar, no
oubt not the place where he and
e captain were. He says he took
e captain back, dragging him for a
ospital bed, but the captain was a
omer straightaway, and my father
s pallbearer from out the smoke
d filth, with stiff upper chest.

"So," says my father, wearying
omewhat of his lonah status, "it
is going to have to be a major
ext time, just to make sure of
'erything." What does he mean by
erything? Enormous respect accrues
o him from the rank and file to rid
ourselves of one officer is helpful, it
ot distinguished; to shed two is al-
most sublime, it not absolute, but to
it paid to three is an act of divine
ntervention making you long for
ore. My feeling at first hearing this
ory was that they should have
dded up my father's victims' ranks
(two lieutenants plus one captain
nakes seven stars, or "pips"), thus
emaking him as two captains plus
ne second lieutenant, let's say a full
olonel even if only, as they used to
y, for the duration (of the war).
le says nothing about this kind of
nfernal exchange. I do the dirty
ork for him, knowing a few cam-
aign and victory medals will come
s way in neat little postable boxes
ke those in which slivers of wed-
ing cake arrive, but he will not re-
eive what the three officers wanted
or him, and for themselves ("a
ighly decorated N.C.O.").

Soon after, a shell lands near him
nd he comes to soaked in the blood
f a man named Blood. My father
ill be blind for a year, only to have
he sight of one eye restored by a
reezy American surgeon from Pitts-
urgh. For that year, clad in the royal
lue tunic of wounded veteran, he
otters about with cane and nurse,
onging for his French nurse in the
arly days of convalescence ("treated
e like the man I was, she did"),
eminiscing about the time he and
oe Whitworth, a footballer for a
heffield team, released a greased pig
nto a crowded Belgian café, my fa-
her always trying to prove, even
with blindness on, that blindness,
what a man he was after volunteering
back in 1914 as soon as war was de-
clared. The scar from the shrapnel
hole in his back, an oval white disc,
occupies the same place on mine,
courtesy of who knows what genetics,
and I remember with stupefied fascination how, in the evenings, he
would ascend to the second-floor
bathroom to catch the black pepper
of shrapnel "walking out" of his seeing eye, this with a match shaved to
a superfine point. His hand never
shook during this stark obsequy to
microsurgery, though he might easily
impale the jelly and go blind again.
His old kit bag, the little book of
military prayers, and the strip of
brass that held his buttons while he
polished them all found their way
into my suitcase of war memorabilia,
plus one discarded eye patch and a
tinted postcard of Roubaix framed in
a double cross shaped like a ticktacktoe. I used to have his cap badge,
surely an artillery gun, flank view,
against the trees of good old Sherwood Forest, then I remember that
he transferred to the
Machine Gun Corps.

He is no man for souvenirs. It is
all in his head as he pores over the
maps and inserts the flags, schooling
his son in military history just in
case and helplessly getting it all out
into the open because Mildred simply will not hear him out about it.
No more war, she murmurs and retreats into Bach and Beethoven. So I
always remember symmetry and
moonlight in the presence of maps,
peaceful reconciliation and cranky
self-assertion in the presence of
atrocity and marching. My father enjoys his war and then, with it over,
enjoys it again, claiming friendships
are never deeper, behavior never
better, and astonishing us all except
his drinking cronies with his assertion that the Germans were more
honorable than the French or the
Belgians. The Germans would never
have left him, as one Belgian platoon did, manning a machine gun
aimed at the English Channel while
the enemy advanced from the east.
He forgives, but he remembers the
detail of every affront, every deed of
valor, smiling at his [illegible]
apparently fragged and of German
troops machine-gunned (thousands).

You see now, perhaps, why [illegible]
is over at twenty, his accountancy
dreams mimeoed by a shell, his
prowess at games left lopsided (he
tried batting one-eyed), his extended
dream of becoming a metallurgist
like two of my mother's brothers
done away with. I still see his Albert
Camus face leaning over those maps
as if they are clothes he will one day
don for a parade or a gala evening at
the Duke of York bar, he preening
himself with a cork-tipped Craven
"A" in one hand and a blob of
V.S.O.P. in the other, holding forth
about the old rough-cut uniforms,
France ("that nest of spicery"), or
how in Ancient Egypt the embalmers used a thing like a crochet
hook to scoop the brains from the
skulls of the royal dead. Having no
future to speak of, he improvises a
fabulous present of talk and glamour,
mutilation and encyclopedic learning. He reads like a machine, remembering everything, history
mainly but sometimes, to my mother's horror, his favorite novel, Eric
Linklater's *Impregnable Woman*, a title almost taboo in those days. He
glows in these evenings as I hear him
out, and he sighs when returning his
maps to me, who kneel on a chair,
too small to sit and peer down. Between us, flailing away over two-dimensional versions of landscape, we
win the war for him (he never witnessed the Armistice) and explore
the merits of one eye closed. He gets
a small, nominal job at the local
ironworks, supervising, and my sister
and I walk to meet his tram daily,
shepherding him the mile home, one
on either side of him, urging him not
to veer left into the road, as he mostly does when we cannot find a sidewalk on the other side, where he
drifts into gates, walls, and bushes.
He lets us be in charge of him, we
his lieutenants.

He keeps teaching me how to
salute, snap it up and down, palm
flat and open "just to show you have
no Luger hidden there, son." He renames me Cobber, after an air ace of
the next war. We box a bit and tap
the claret, and we smite wooden

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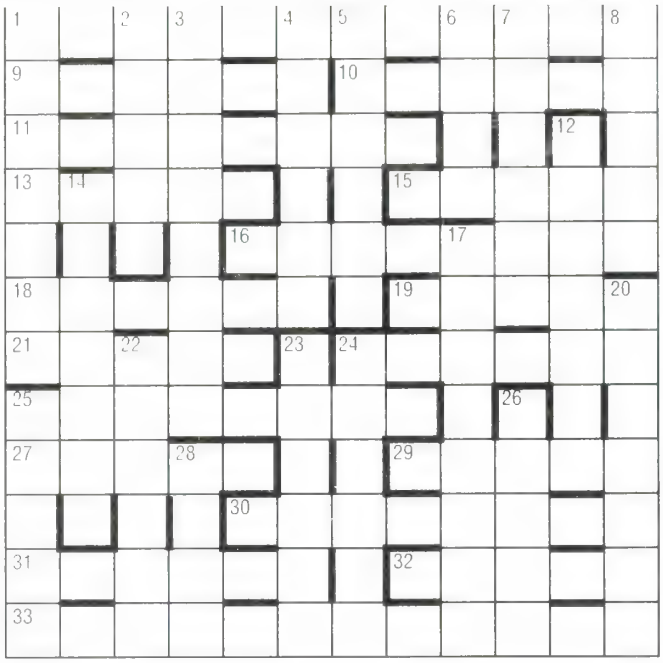
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Two in One

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Sabre of The Listener*)*

Two consecutive letters in an answer may be entered into any one square, e.g., AN/ELL. Where Across and Down words intersect in a double-letter square, either order of the letters may be used.

Answers include five proper names. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 77.



ACROSS

1. The very least you expect from a shopgirl responding to surveillance? (19)
9. It's a cinch someone about to be successful will be heard by Parliament (10)
10. Pads of a sort for handstill, girl—ouch, ouch, ouch (9)
11. Do they create parts for drug-taking mimics? About right (12)
13. Great paintings from Fleming, covered with breasts (7)
15. Olympian touching the net in one article after another (7)
16. Heads off shady IT Escapade? (11)
18. Offensive times I love, *entre nous* (7)
19. Clever-sounding, popular smarty (9)
21. Take steps to get to the set touchdowns? (8)
24. Charges a royal band with someone else in the lead (10)
25. You might find them slimed, on browsing down the house (12)
27. Prejudgment produces whopping zero-recessive (7)
29. Put down a company somewhere in Mexico (7)
30. Is it set in exotic Rumania or Africa? (11)
31. One following Christ, one in prison, and one above us? (8)
32. White X-mas—sorry (8)
33. Chooses to hold (with backing of Gold Card) ten lightweight readings from "The Tell-Tale Heart"! (18)

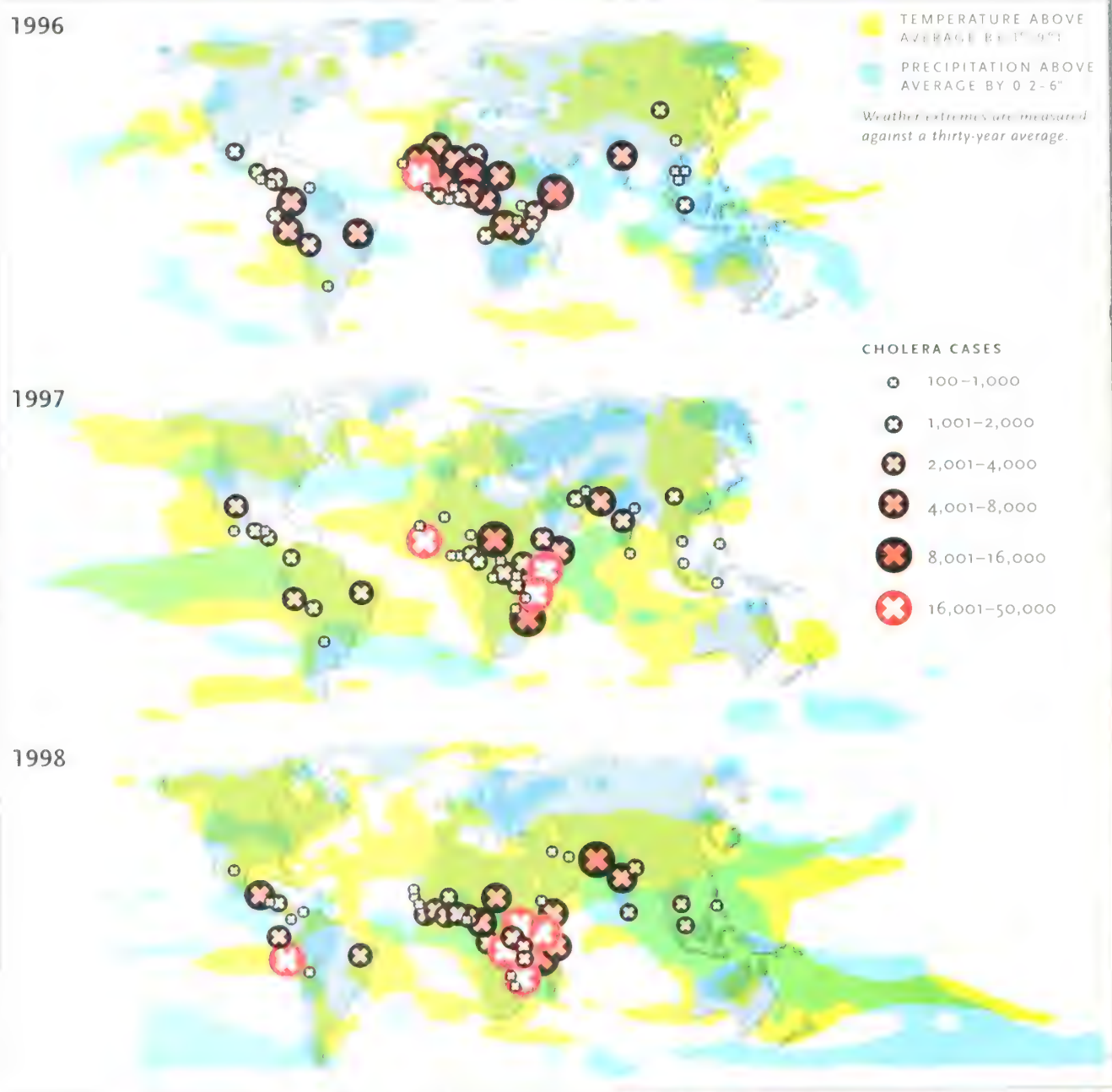
DOWN

1. A mug first found in a bad location at work (12)
2. It's galling to place value in what's still upcoming (8)
3. Inventive imitators have right to be pests (11)
4. Inclinations reported to make tendon seize (10)
5. Let just a bit rub off—I don't know how to make it smoother (9)
6. A lot of computer space gives chance to perform somewhat (7)
7. Teach two types about land (9)
8. Takes the testimony, in part, from experts on beauty (8)
12. Link your family with it (12)
14. Going in to the on clouds, his work is classified! (10)
17. Getting in with trendy indication of family fare going over at one (12)
20. Gilaces start to come between two equine treats (10)
22. On the way up, one top guy is hardworking (8)
23. Left upper class on the outside of the Half Moon (9)
24. Understood prisoners forced to go straight (9)
25. Lace bed curtains—disaster (7)
26. Island suffering traumas (7)
28. He cuts through the bull to make out, alternatively (8)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Two in One," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by April 15. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive a one-year subscription to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners' names will be printed in the Insert section of the February puzzle. Thanks to M. M. Josephson, Stratford, Connecticut; M. Jean Mortimer, Richmond Hill, Ontario; and Trudy Sundberg, Oak Harbor, Washington.

UNDER THE WEATHER

Like many parasitic trails, that of the cholera vibrio is littered with ancient and preventable ill. It is also on the rise, due in p to the unpredictable effects of global warming. Between 1991 and 1995 the number of reported cholera cases worldwide doubled to almost 300,000, and deaths jumped by two thirds to exceed 15,000. Cholera bacilli occur naturally in warm aquatic environments and flourish in excessive heat, their spread aided by floods, rain. Both conditions pictured below. The drought and flo associated with global warming increase the likelihood of transmission through tainted drinking water and food. Relat poverty, which at high winds and bad tides hamper prevention and treatment, and to the highly concentrated or mobile populations ass with extreme poverty. Properly treated, fewer than 1 percent of cholera patients die; in recent years many countries have report death rates of 1 percent or less, including the medical advancement not the greenhouse gases produced by the industrialized world.





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COLD WAR

Our feature [illegible]
ILLUSTRATION BY [illegible]

HARPER'S

LETTERS

Fat Lip

I commend Gregg Cruser for bringing to the forefront the connection between America's obesity epidemic and social class ("Let Them Eat Fat," March). But his superciliously condescending ridicule of opposing viewpoints undercuts his article's effectiveness. Cruser claims that the misdirection of fat-activist feminists is preventing a sober national dialogue on class and obesity. Dismissing overeaters' "social stigma" as a means of controlling women's weight gain. He's even disappointed that poor black women's self-esteem isn't more dependent on their appearance, and he hopes to shame them into eating less.

Ironically, only when the stigma is [illegible] does Cruser [illegible] and pundits who'd rather shame them than [illegible]. Yet despite [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] risky behavior. But cancer sufferers, even former smokers, are not universally [illegible] subjects of mockery.

Cruser displays ill-informed prejudice [illegible]

[illegible] movement when he dismisses it as "[illegible] very vocal minority of super-obese female activists" who "deny the need to promote healthy thinness." On the contrary, the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, whose members come in all sizes and both genders, sponsors seminars on health, weight loss, and fitness while emphasizing that personal change should be motivated by self-regard, not by self-hatred or fear of discrimination. Cruser undermines his credibility by stereotyping these civil-rights activists as a bunch of loud-mouthed, ignorant fat women.

Lora Rao
New York City

I have debated responding to Gregg Cruser's article on the fat "epidemic" for a few weeks now, wishing to answer each fallacy he presents. I have finally decided simply to tell you that I am fat and, to my surprise, somehow intelligent enough to read *Harper's Magazine*. (According to Cruser, if I am that smart, I should by definition also be rich enough to be thin.)

I am intelligent enough, in fact, not to keep reading a magazine that would publish such hateful, ignorant, scientifically unsupported garbage.

Heidi Gutmann
Hillsborough, Calif.

Gregg Cruser argues that fast-food restaurants are somehow to blame for the increase in obesity among our country's youth. Then, in his conclusion, he points to a kind of conspiracy, in which the food industry has orchestrated the fat

...mist of the undecided. Critser gives ... at an economist's nutshell explana... on: "[I]n a society as overly competi... ve as our own, the affluent have found ... way to slow down the striving poor ... om inevitable nipping at their heels."

This is the sort of blame-game that ...erpetuates the real problem, which ... our passive dependence on policy ... technology to save us from our... elves. My guess is that a bona fide ... onomist would have a much simpler ...xplanation: supply meets demand. If ... ost people attached the same stigma ... obesity that the affluent do (as ...ritser moralistically suggests that they ...ould), and if they wanted to be thin ...d healthy (to avoid risks associated ...ith obesity or simply to look better), ...ey would find ways to eat more sen... ibly. They would demand it, and fast-...od restaurants would gladly comply.

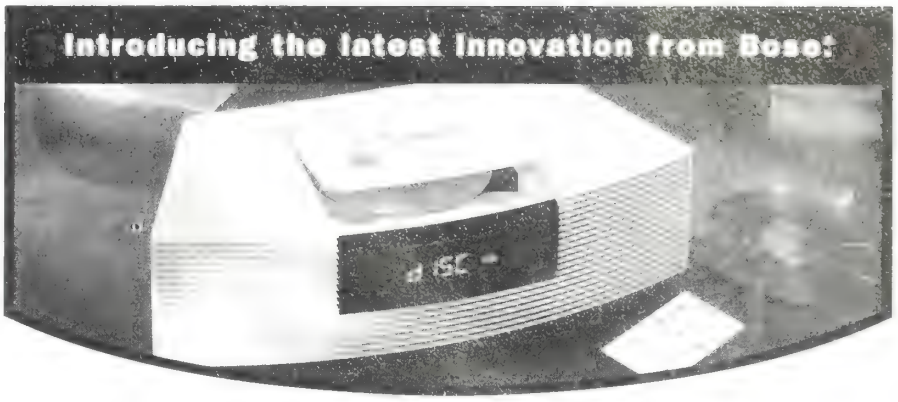
The solution, as with most of soci... ty's ills, lies in education, and there ... lies the closest thing to Critser's con... piracy. As long as Coca-Cola, Hershey, ...raft, and Slim Fast are sponsoring the ...forts of the North American Associ... tion for the Study of Obesity, there is ... incentive to educate.

...hawn Smith
...outh Wales, Pa.

It is a serious omission for an article ...xamining links between fat and eco... omic forces to fail to mention that the ...eight-loss industry is a $30 billion to ...50 billion concern (according to *The ...ew England Journal of Medicine*). This ...epresents individuals profiting from ...ocial pressure to achieve the elusive ...oal of permanent weight loss. If, as ...ritser claims, "a very vocal minority ...f super-obese female activists" (like ...me) have "played a role in the ten... ency to deny the need to promote ...ealthy thinness," surely the weight-...oss industry has played a role in keep... ng people like Critser from seeing that ...ealth at any size is a more construc... ve goal than universal slenderness.

...usan Stinson
...orthampton, Mass.

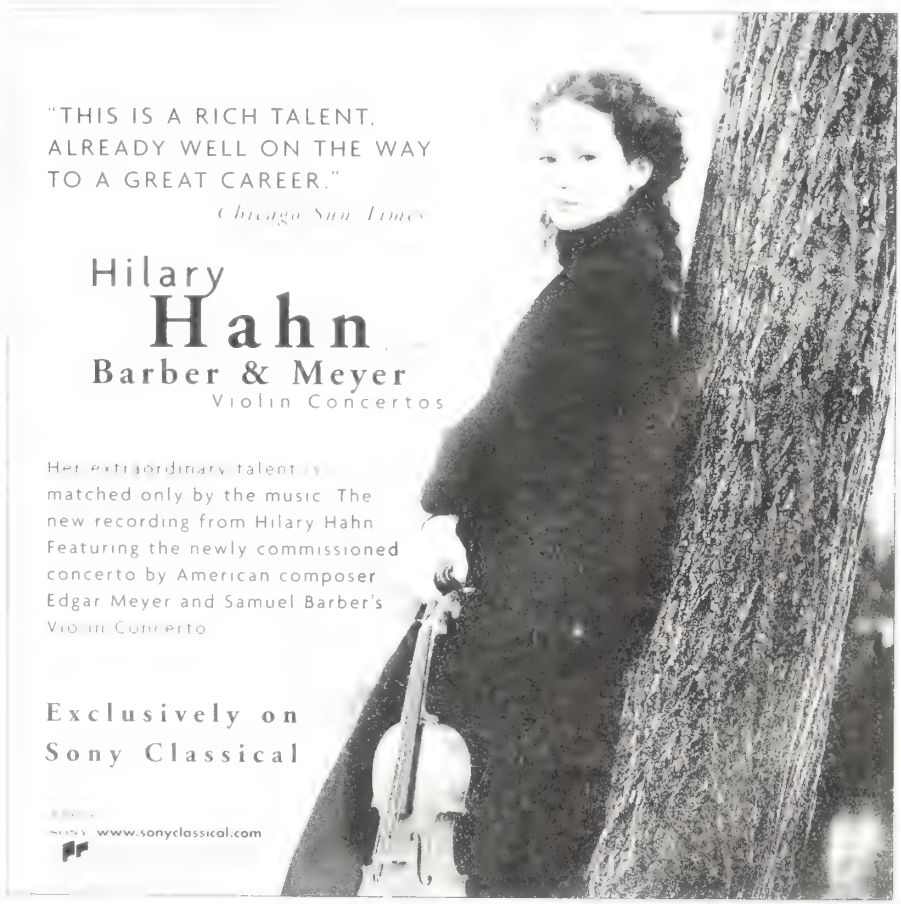
Before Greg Critser comes back to ...he ghetto to tell us "fat, darker, ex... loited poor" folks we'd better clean up ...r get left behind, perhaps he should at... end to lighter folk too. Why ignore



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[illegible] the author's real intent is to justify con[illegible] by describing just how animalistic, lazy, [illegible]

[illegible] compassion [illegible] year-old [illegible] should want to [illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible] that "a few more black [illegible] might not be such a bad [illegible] reinforce the dangerous perception that the only [illegible] bodies are to be [illegible] than intact, [illegible] choose an excessive [illegible] preferable alternative [illegible] choose a healthy body over both.

[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible] Greg Critser's well-headed [illegible] explain America's problem with obesity. For [illegible] and [illegible] The [illegible] "convenience food" marketed to happy [illegible] after WWII. His [illegible] the products it spawned are chock-full of mind-altering, endocrine-disrupting [illegible] chemicals.

[illegible] you may grow [illegible] chemicals and nutritional whiteouts.

[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

tions, inducing lethargy, enhancing resignation. When there is little to do and less to hope for, canned applesauce not only gives an instant pleasure to the taste buds but leaves the eater in a physical and psychological stupor. In the weight-loss center I run for a Harvard Medical School hospital, I see many patients—rich, poor, and in-between—who use fat-filled foods as a way of avoiding painful or hopeless situations. Perhaps one answer to obesity is to give the young reason to believe that there may be more to life than mindless superstardom and soft drink.

Judith Wurtman
Belmont, Mass.

I applaud Greg Critser's article. As he makes clear, obesity is one of the most important threats to the health of the citizenry of this country, and its complications—diabetes and hypertension—afflict an alarming number of ethnic Latinos in southern California. I am a first-year resident physician at Los Angeles County University of Southern California Medical Center, where most of our patients are of Central-American or Mexican-American descent. In our practice we confront an increasingly obese populace daily. Critser's article should be read by physicians and policymakers, as it clearly shows that a three-pronged approach consisting of patient education, behavior modification, and public-health policy initiatives is needed to make this issue a top national priority.

[illegible], M.D., Ph.D.
Los Angeles

Once Critser accurately describes much of the morbidity that accompanies obesity, but his report is not without error. He correctly refers to the association of pseudotumor cerebri with obesity in young women. Unfortunately, he identifies the condition as "a brain tumor." Pseudotumor cerebri, as the name implies, mimics a brain tumor in certain ways. Patients with pseudotumor cerebri have increased intracranial pressure. They do not, however, have a tumor.

[illegible], M.D.
Penn State University College of Medicine
University Park, Pa.

Once Critser gives us American punch in our flabby little noses for stuffing ourselves and our children with fat—and for refusing to address the socioeconomic distribution of the resultant problems. He also takes the medical establishment appropriately to task for allowing corporate underwriters (the prime culprits in promoting the "spread" of American obesity) to define "the parameters of public discussion."

Take my neighborhood, for example. Harlem, New York City. On the corner of Lenox Avenue and 135th Street you can see huge banners plastered all over Harlem Hospital proclaiming that it is [illegible] #49 [illegible]

In the hospital's ground-floor retail space, what do you find? A McDonald's restaurant. The medical establishment, it appears, has been and always will be talking out of both sides of its institutional mouth.

Martin L. Lutz
New York City

An Immodest Proposal

With respect to Roger D. Hodge's paean to the "genital artist" Matthew Barney ("Onan the Magnificent," March), are you kidding?

John and Maggy Hollis
Lemeadia, Calif.

I was four and a half minutes into Roger D. Hodge's essay before I realized I was being had. Not even the pseudo-sophomoric prose ("Such a coldness—all so very short") and declamations ("a name of sufficient grandeur, one that will echo through the halls of future museums") alerted me.

What a send-up! One wishes Hodge would turn his attention to "installations" and fractal verse (the [illegible] that life is [illegible]), suburban architecture, educational theory, and campaign finance. Phrases like "Onanism is to the Men's Movement what Italian Renaissance painting was to Humanism" portend a Daumier of criticism.

[illegible] Young
Salisbury, N.C.

Ke[illegible] to *Hoo*[illegible] M[illegible]nd
oger D Hodge for having truly [illegible]
an [illegible]say in the [illegible] to publish
"from the Menstruum." I've never read
more scathing, Swiftian indictment
a contemporary art movement in
y life—though I do feel for genital
rtists everywhere—and Matthew Bar-
ey in particular—for they are, in the
nd, easy targets.

Despite Hodge's tendency to chop
he satirical ball with excessively de-
sive remarks such as "Matthew Bar-
ey is the Michelangelo of genital
t" and "Barney emerged in the late
980's *pilly period*" (emphasis mine),
s hilarious depiction of the C[illegible]
aster cycle was one long stroke of
enius. Hodge has answered the call
criticism with great wit, proving
hat the most grotesquely swollen
gos result, quite literally, from a life
f too much masturbation and too
ttle imagination.

Bravo! What fun!

nthony Deaton
Washington, Pa.

It is fitting that the only word that
an aptly describe Roger D. Hodge's
elebration of Matthew Barney's
Onanism" is *masturbatory*. Let us hope
hat Hodge is correct in his claim that
Onanism" represents the "end of
enital art"—and that this means there
ill be no further writing about it.

ronwy Lopez
Ithaca, N.Y.

Nothing is more quickly and thor-
ughly tiresome than a man's absorp-
on in his own genitalia. Roger D.
Hodge is partially right; apparently the
rts have reached a "state of pure,
nadulterated, prepubescent play."
Whether this is a boon or a horrible ac-
ident remains open to debate.

The language of Hodge's essay is hy-
erbolic and dubious. "Feminized class-
ooms." The "rule of humorless, man-
ating wives." A "false and feminine
netaphysics." The "tragedy of the
exes." These claims do indeed seem
repubescent, if nothing else.

If feminization can salvage us and
ur discourse from this strange, hate-
l, and self-congratulatory rhetoric, I
ge the tireless "feminizers" to keep
[illegible]
if necessary.

[illegible]
Missoula, Mont.

While Roger D. Hodge deserves
credit for bringing the [illegible]
hermetic world of Matthew Barney to
the attention of a wider public, I must
take exception with his implicit in-
terpretation of Barney's concerns. I
have seen two of the [illegible] films,
Cremaster 4 and *Cremaster 5*, many
each of them and with more than
strongly urge you, as however, that
would seem to be dealt with. Hodge
all-important "mythic descent of Man's
Testicle." Barney's [illegible]
assertion of masculinity that
nomics of the dubious cultural con-
structs "masculine" and "feminine."
The appearance of the cremaster mus-
cle occurs at about the seventh week
of fetal development; for almost a quar-
ter of its life in the womb, the fetus is
undifferentiated; and, as Hodge right-
ly points out, this issue of sexual dif-
ferentiation is crucial to Barney. That
this differentiation occurs relatively
well along in the individual's devel-
opment, and then has such an over-
whelming impact on the [illegible]
that an individual's [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
of France's art.

Hodge gets much about Barney's
work right, [illegible]
[illegible]
quite helpful in tracing some of Bar-
ney's recurring motifs. But to see Bar-
ney's art as a manifestation of the
Men's Movement (is that still around?)
is simply wrong-headed. Why else
would Barney play the deliberately
casting Norman Mailer—[illegible]
anyone's short list for Most Testos-
terone-Addled Artist, as the great es-
cape artist Harry Houdini? [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[

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NOTEBOOK

Kulturkampf

By Lewis H. Lapham

It is not enough to write in Yiddish, one must have something to say.

—Y. L. Peretz

Among the many cautionary tales told by Frances Stonor Saunders in her new book, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, the one about the canonization of Jackson Pollock I found the most instructive. At Yale University in the 1950s (the period of Ms. Saunders's primary concern) I was introduced to Pollock's genius in a sophomore course explicating the enigmatic texts of abstract expressionism. Although I thought the paintings meaningless, I dutifully took the required notes ("rhapsodies in blue," "triumph of American art," "answer to Picasso") and attributed my ignorance to the low status of an underclassman not yet initiated into the mysteries of the modernist aesthetic. Had I known that Pollock's *Blue Poles* was meant to be appreciated as an instrument of Cold War foreign policy, like a nuclear arms treaty or an aircraft carrier, I might have better understood the course.

Elsewhere in the university at the time I had come across professors acting as CIA recruiting officers, and I was familiar with the suddenly clandestine tone of the conversation at Mory's when the topic shifted from the Elizabethan playwrights to the weather in Berlin. The professor paused to fill his favorite pipe—the one given to him by an RAF pilot when he was with the OSS in London during World War II—and the rest us at the table knew that the time had come to talk about career opportunities in what was then known as "The Company." Not directly, not so that anybody would know where to send the résumé, but in a circuitous sort of way, with oblique references to the Truman Station and the Fulda Gap.

Nobody ever mentioned Pollock or the paramilitary deployment of Richard Diebenkorn and Georgia O'Keeffe. Before reading Saunders's well-informed and often humorous book, I had known about the CIA's funding of the magazine *Encounter* (also about its penetrations into the Ivy League universities and the pages of the *Washington Post*), but I hadn't guessed at the extent to which the agency had set itself up as a national endowment for the arts. Saunders supplies the historical context never fully illuminated by the professors with the pipes. Although the Allies had won the war against Hitler (won it in the name of democratic freedom and Western civilization), they appeared to be losing the peace to Stalin and the systems of totalitarian repression. What was afoot in the 1950s was a contest for the good opinion of mankind, and the evil Russian empire (like a play by the Marquess of Queensberry) rules—all forms of literary or artistic expression locked in the dungeons of state policy, the open market in ideas subject to the stamps of government inspection.

The Communist agitprop on offer in Europe pictured the United States as a materialist wasteland inhabited by gum chewing automobile salesmen, lynchers of Negroes, and ignorant philistines unfamiliar with the works of Gramsci or Céline, and it had been left to the CIA to mount the counteroffensive. The national security directives had been issued in 1947, and for the next twenty years—while it also was busy plotting political assassinations in Africa, routinely lying to the U.S. Congress, and covertly overthrowing foreign governments in Guatemala and Iran (the agency noted for its slanderous anti-Soviet calumny, running the sales promotion for America the Beautiful, carrying out President Eisenhower's injunction to "get the world, by peaceful means, to believe the truth").

The armament of ideas must needs serve the imperatives of politics, most urgently in Europe, where the situation in the early 1950s looked like a postcard from the Bolshevik Revolution. An impoverished populace had been reduced to near starvation in the broken streets of ruined cities; the Vienna waterfront had been bombed for fuel, and 13 million refugees wandered across a desolate countryside, foraging for rats, sleeping in holes. The abundant [illegible] evidence of the [illegible] lifting up the hope of Communist salvation. In Italy and France the rumors of leftist coups d'état drifted noisily through the cafés, Soviet [illegible] in the modern Munich and Milan (singing songs, holding flowers), labor unions up in arms in Barcelona and Marseilles (raising placards, shouting slogans), university professors hurling out the syllabus of Marx and Lenin, anti-American posters plastered on the statues in empty public squares.

Confronted with so grim a prospect, the CIA adopted Soviet strategies of Cold War propaganda (how to stage a music festival, where [illegible] the point of which [illegible] the point of [illegible] the [illegible] confidence [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] people [illegible] the [illegible] might [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] Jean Paul Sartre

to be found by rounding up the compliance of America's leading cultural institutions. Among the organizations that served as conduits for CIA money (sometimes witting ly, sometimes not) Saunders names the Ford, Rockefeller and J. M. Kaplan foundations, Time Inc., the Metropolitan Opera and the Museum of Modern Art, PEN, Harper & Row, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Modern Language Association.

The second maneuver was easier than the first. The country's governing class in the 1950s consisted of a relatively small number of people, wealthy and predominantly Protestant, who had attended many of the same schools, belonged to most of the same clubs, remembered the stories of Rudyard Kipling, and admired the plot lines of imperial romance. They staffed the boards of art museums and symphony orchestras, ran publishing companies, owned newspapers, taught history to the undergraduates at Yale. Everybody knew, more or less, everybody else (if not Allen Dulles, then Nelson Rockefeller or one of the Bundy brothers), and the covert gentlemen in Washington didn't have much trouble asking favors from the overt gentlemen in New Haven or New York.

In the 1950s new American intellectuals of any cast or stripe questioned the goodness of the American system or the wickedness of the Soviet state. The Communists obviously were telling lies, and the friends of free expression understood that one didn't sally forth onto the battlefield of ideological mumbo jumbo armed only with the simple truth. George Kennan in 1946 had advanced the "containment concept" as the necessary basis for the strategy of Cold War containment, and it was well as understood that one embraced the virtues of plausible deniability, the successful use of misleading statement, the manufacture of

[illegible] speeches, the [illegible] standard-bearers from the ranks of the [illegible] for [illegible] 1950s [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] the

urkampt finally reached the Amerin press in 1966–67 (the result of ories in the *New York Times Book* ews, and *The Saturday Evening ost*), the entire regiment of frontne intellectuals issued statements of isavowal. Never in life had they eard of such wretched rumors or inamous accusations. They were their wn masters, independent spirits, oices of conscience. Yes, possibly nce or twice, late at night in the itz bar or on a train to Brussels, hey might have met an American ncyclopedia salesman (short-haired nd clean-cut, wearing a Brooks rothers raincoat and carrying a rietease full of money), but they ever made him for a CIA agent. To he best of their recollections they ad talked to the nice young man bout Mozart, Roy Campanella, and is mother.

The sure sign of successful propaanda, italicized in the CIA's own nstruction manuals, is "a subject noved in a direction you desire, for easons he believes to be his own," nd it's always a mistake to discount ither the egoism or the credulity of he literary and artistic folk. Even if ney knew of the government's inerest in their essays or their watercolors, I can't find any good reason, fty years after the fact, to indict hem on charges of conspiracy. rtists take their patrons where they nd them, and they don't much care hether payment comes from Cesare orgia, the Margrave of Brandenurg, or Allen Dulles. If one were to ault a work of art for the politics of ither its creator or its creator's emloyer, the corollary policies of aesnetic cleansing would oblige the orld's museums, together with the orld's libraries, theaters, and conert halls, to remove from their inentories and repertoires most of the orld's masterpieces.

But the CIA, like the Soviet proaganda machine from which it borowed both premises and methods, asn't interested in art. The agency as in the advertising business, hawkng a product, running a sales promoon that relied, as does any other ales promotion, on the messianic oncept of the necessary lie. The arketing managers in Washington

ound in Jackson Pollock's early prototype of the Marlboro Man, dramatic image that moved beyond ject, the question of their value as a painter didn't make the meeting.

By the time the CIA withdrew its cultural subsidies in 1967, a second and third generation of critics had learned to rate ideology at a higher value than art or literature. The contradictions of the Cold War—in Vietnam, on the map overlays in the Kremlin and the Pentagon, in the theories of mutually assured nuclear destruction—preserved the markets for deft sophistry and grand simplification. The government arts bureaucracies and corporate think tanks assumed the burden of paying for the intellectual mood music, and careerists schooled in the strategic deployment of Aristotle and Edmund Burke once again changed gravy trains, stowing the luggage of their allegiance in the first-class compartments provided by The Heritage Foundation and The American Enterprise Institute. Less agile émigrés from the non-Communist left found refuge in the universities and adopted the practice of literary realpolitik to the variant doctrines of political correctness.

The friends of democratic freedom apparently had learned more from their Soviet enemies than their enemies had learned from them, and on both sides of what came to be known in the 1980's as "the culture wars" the combatants deployed history as agitprop, art as advertising copy, the preferred lie as the revealed truth. By now we have become so accustomed to thinking of culture as an adjective modifying a political or commercial noun (cultural identity, cultural development and diversity, cultural policy objective, multicultural T-shirt, etc.) that on first opening a book or walking into an art gallery we look for the stamps of ideological inspection rather than a talent for expression. Ms. Saunders reminds us that long ago and in another country, literary critics noticed the difference between good writing and bad, and works of art were ends, not means. ■





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HARPER'S INDEX

Age by which Russian president Vladimir Putin tried to volunteer for the Eagles : 1

Number of presidential decrees Putin issued within two months of taking office last December : 494

Estimated percentage of people living in Russia's Ingushetia province last February who were Chechen war refugees : 57

Percentage increase in NATO troops required to seal Kosovo's border, according to a Pentagon official last March : 150

Chance that a U.N. member country other than the U.S. or Israel did not vote for a 1999 ban on "anti-human rights torture" : 1 in 2

Number of days of Israeli bombing it took last winter to disable a Lebanon power grid for a year : 1

Portion of Iran's current population that was under the age of ten at the outset of the 1979 hostage crisis : 7/10

Ratio of the average price of oil in the fall of 1979 to the price last February : 1:1

Rank of the 47,000 acres of U.S. land sold to Occidental Petroleum in 1997 among the largest federal land sales ever : 1

Number of acres of Brazil's Pinamabizinho region that the country's government promised to return to its Indians in 1995 : 5,263

Number of acres returned so far : 0

Years before Indonesia hired Henry Kissinger last winter that he was the U.S. adviser on its invasion of East Timor : 23.5

Percentage by which India has announced that it will increase its military budget next year : 28

Rank of Bangladesh and Poland among countries accounting for the largest number of U.N. peacekeepers deployed last fall : 2,1

Ratio of the number of people worldwide who are indicted to those who are convicted : 1:1

Percentage change since 1997 in direct government payments to U.S. farmers : +200

Percentage change since then in total farm income, government payments included : –1

Average amount of revenue per acre generated by a U.S. farm of fewer than ten acres : $1,902.50

Average revenue per acre generated by a farm of more than 2,000 acres : $21.40

Ratio of U.S. corn exports to Europe last year to such exports in 1996 : 1:220

Factor by which a shipment of Ukrainian mushrooms seized by French customs last year exceeded legal radiation limits : 12

Percentage of all aquatic life in a Danube tributary killed last winter when a mine's tailings dam overflowed : 95

Percentage change since 1988 in the amount of seafood eaten worldwide that is cultivated rather than caught : +140

Chance that a U.S. fisherman died on the job in 1998 : 1 in 718

Chance that a U.S. police officer did : 1 in 4,615

Rank of traffic accidents among the leading causes of death for on-duty U.S. police officers last year : 1

Chance that a police officer in South Africa is not licensed to drive : 1 in 10

Price of an AK-47 on Uganda's black market, in chickens : 1

Number of endangered tortoises that U.S. Customs agents discovered in a man's trousers last December in Miami : 55

Price of a sautéed lobster gilded with 24-carat gold at Boston's Biba restaurant last New Year's Eve : $44

Price of a night in Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center's "special suite" equipped with antiques and a living room : $2,800

Chances that a crib provided by a U.S. hotel or motel is deemed unsafe by the Consumer Products Safety Commission : 4 in 5

Estimated number of American men who suffer from compulsive bodybuilding : 669,000

Points by which the percentage of U.S. college students who are "frequent binge drinkers" has changed since 1993 : +3

Points by which the percentage who are abstainers has changed : +4

Chance that a college student expects to be a millionaire by the age of 40 : 1 in 2

Percentage of Americans earning $50,000 or less who have watched *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* : 57

Percentage earning at least $75,000 who have watched it : 81

Number of TV game shows hosted by Mike Wallace before beginning his full-time journalism career : 7

Ratio of the number of hotel rooms planned for Las Vegas's Venetian Hotel to all the hotel rooms in Venice : 1:1

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available. [...] Most figures are from the year [illegible] of Harper's Index went to press.


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READINGS

[Essay]

GLOBALISM FOR DUMMIES

From "Globalism on the Ropes," by Mark Weisbrot, published on TomPaine.com in March. Weisbrot is codirector of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C., and coauthor, with Dean Baker, of Social Security: The Phony Crisis, *published in January by the University of Chicago Press.*

On December 1, 1999, as clouds of tear gas hovered over the streets of Seattle, President Clinton said yes to 50,000 protesters when he wanted to say no. He agreed to make labor rights an enforceable condition for trade among the countries of the World Trade Organization, a concession that had the immediate effect of scuttling the Millennium Round of the WTO. The pundits were not amused. Michael Kelly accused President Clinton of taking "a dive in Seattle for Labor, the environment and the loony left"; Thomas Friedman opined that the protests were "ridiculous," "crazy," carried out by "a Noah's ark of flat-earth advocates, protectionist trade unionists and yuppies looking for their 1960's fix"; Michael Kinsley assured the public that "the WTO is OK"—without saying anything about what it does—and urged them to "do the math. Or take it on faith."

These mostly contemptuous dismissals betray an underlying intellectual weakness; although the defenders of the status quo have been largely successful in pretending that they have the bulk of economic research and theory on their side, the [illegible]

[illegible] reason. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are bleeding Africa dry, exacting debt payments from the poorest countries in the world that are [illegible] income) as the Allies considered conscionable [illegible] relentless promotion of resource-intensive export [illegible] that [illegible] the WTO to substitute their judgment for that of elected representatives on matters of public health and safety. But [illegible] code the economic [illegible] for globalization, as it stands, is mostly incoherent rhetoric.

Let us [illegible] commonly accepted definition of globalization: an [illegible] the [illegible] volved? Or even [illegible] any given country." In the [illegible] is now almost [illegible] GDP [illegible] both [illegible] though [illegible]

more than three billion people live have moved toward the market and seen rapid growth in income. This is not true, unless the historians of the future are immensely. In Latin America, for example, income per person has hardly grown at all over the last two decades: about 5.6 percent total for 1980–97. If we compare this with the previous two decades, before the "Washington Consensus" of liberalized trade and investment was adopted, the contrast is striking: from 1960 to 1980, income per person grew by 73 percent. Summers seems to be excluding Africa, where per capita income grew by 34.3 percent from 1960 to 1980 but has since fallen by about 23 percent. Some of the "emerging markets" of Asia (China, Indonesia, South Korea) have in fact grown rapidly over the last twenty years, but they also grew rapidly in the previous decades. And even these countries are mainly the exceptions that prove the rule: the "crony capitalists" who have largely disregarded Washington's advice; and China, a country that does not have a convertible currency, maintains state control of its banking system, and allows little foreign ownership in equity markets.

All this simply evaluates the globalization effort on the terms of its proponents: the growth of per capita income. But that is merely the most basic measure of economic progress; it says nothing about the distribution of income, which has also worsened both within and between countries as globalization has proceeded, or environmental destruction, the loss of biodiversity, labor or human rights, or any of the other issues raised by the protesters in Seattle.

For most commentators, however, these questions do not arise, because the entire process is seen through a prism of technological and market determinism. Their narrative is a simple one: the poorer countries are passing through stages that we completed in the last century. Child labor, poverty-level wages, intolerable levels of pollution—these are things that will recede with development, helped along by trade and inflows of foreign investment. But in fact no nation has ever pulled itself out of poverty under the conditions that Washington currently imposes on underdeveloped countries. Economists have long known that markets by themselves—whether international or domestic—would not accomplish the task of economic development. Although there have been many paths to development, virtually all have required a host of interventions by the state deliberately designed to alter the comparative advantage of the national economy. The protection of northern manufacturing was a major cause of our own civil war, with the southern slaveholders unsuccessfully trying to raise the banner of free trade. And the few countries that have successfully industrialized after Europe and America—such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan—have, as latecomers, needed much higher levels of protection, plan-

[1998]

GIMME AN "N"!

Dramatic skit performed for the board of directors of the American Society by Mexican schoolchildren at a meeting in Guadalajara last year. The meeting was attended by financier David Rockefeller, former commerce secretary Robert Mosbacher, and other major supporters of the North American Free Trade Agreement. The skit appears in The Selling of "Free Trade": NAFTA, Washington, and the Subversion of American Democracy, *by John R. MacArthur, published by Hill and Wang. MacArthur is the publisher of* Harper's Magazine.

[illegible]: Gentlemen, we have finished the agenda! We live in a historic moment!

HERMINIO BLANCO: With great social responsibility, with a deep practical yet humanistic spirit, our countries face and solve together the economic crisis at the end of the twentieth century. NAFTA is a clear answer to the globalization phenomenon that worldwide happens as an unavoidable process.

[illegible] RUIZ SACRISTAN: Our countries have in fact enormous differences in resources, capital, technology, quality-control systems, commercialization channels, and many other items. We know it is not enough to describe the deficiencies; it is necessary to propose concrete solutions.

[illegible]: NAFTA is a trade agreement.

[illegible]: The true spirit of NAFTA will never be forgotten.

[illegible]: Globalization is a reality.

[illegible]: Braver and better job opportunities, that is the goal.

[illegible]: There are new programs not only in the cities but in the countryside. There are better programs, new production systems, new alliances, new technologies, and more profit. We all are the true artisans when we know that everything has been achieved.

[illegible]: Now we need not be allies, we need simply friends; we are partners!

rency, industrial policy, and other measures. Such policies are now increasingly prohibited.

This raises another crucial question: even if our political leaders were right, and the current miseries of globalization were but a temporary hurdle on the road to economic progress, how should this process be directed? The WTO, the IMF, and the World Bank—the three most important international economic institutions—are often described as "institutions of global governance." But in practice they are much more of a global anti-government, unaccountable to any electorate. Indeed one does not need a conspiracy theory to notice the progressive transfer of economic decision-making from governments to unelected bureaucrats.

Ironically, the WTO is the least controlling of the three institutions; the IMF and the World Bank, still flying mostly below radar, are invested with vastly greater and more autocratic powers. The Fund, which has 182 member nations but is basically run by the U.S. Treasury Department, makes the major economic decisions for more than fifty countries. To get a feel for what it is like to be one of the IMF's clients, imagine that London or Paris had to approve Alan Greenspan's latest term as chairman of the Federal Reserve, the Fed's decisions every six weeks on interest-rate policy, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the major legislation considered by the House and Senate finance committees. This makes the Fund one of the most powerful institutions, of any kind, in the whole world. And most of the time the Fund exercises this power without having to lend very much money; IMF approval is a prerequisite for other sources of multilateral credit and for most private credit as well.

Washington is very attached to this arrangement. To take just one example: in the summer of 1997, when the Thai currency began to fall and the Asian financial crisis was just beginning, the Japanese government offered to set up a fund that would provide the necessary guarantees to stem the hemorrhaging of capital. As the major foreign banks were well aware, this was exactly what was needed; a panic was setting in, foreign currency reserves were dangerously low throughout the region, and investors were selling local currencies just to get out before they fell further. China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and other countries offered support for a $100 billion fund to stabilize these currencies. But the idea did not sit well with Treasury, and Larry Summers (then deputy secretary) was quickly dispatched to Asia to kill it. The orders from Washington were clear: any bailout would have to go through the IMF, with results that turned out to be an economic and human disaster.

For now, Washington's globalist agenda has been stopped dead in its tracks. Not coincidentally, ever since NAFTA created the first public debate on U.S. foreign economic policy, every major administration initiative to extend its principles has failed, including fast-track authority for the president to negotiate new trade and commercial agreements, the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment. Then there was the collapse of the Millennium Round of the WTO in Seattle, followed by the battle now under way over China's trade status and entry into the WTO. And the same coalition of forces that was so effective in Seattle will gather in Washington, D.C., on April 16 for the first large-scale protests ever to meet the IMF and World Bank on their home territory.

The world's financial and corporate elite have reason to be concerned. But their warnings of worldwide economic malaise brought on by a backlash against globalization, their visions of a world on the brink of slipping into protectionist, isolationist chaos—as if no one would engage in trade or foreign investment unless they were bound by Washington's rules—are self-serving and overblown. Here is a more likely scenario: The collapse of the globalist agenda will be followed by a more honest and inclusive debate over international economic integration. As the iron grip of institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank is loosened, much of humanity will be freed to pursue new experiments; some of the many possible paths to social and economic development that have been blocked for so long will open up. The demise of the Washington consensus will give rise to new hopes and opportunities for a better world.

[Battle Cry]

UNTO THE BREACH ONCE MORE?

From remarks made on January 24 by Senator Ernest ("Fritz") Hollings (D—S.C.) on the floor of the Senate:

The threat of "free trade" has been with America since its beginning. The fledgling nation had just won its freedom when the mother

country counseled "free trade," to which Alexander Hamilton, in his famous booklet "Report on Manufactures," responded that we would not remain a mere colony, exporting our timber, iron, and agriculture—and importing the finished products from England. The second bill passed by Congress on July 4, 1789 (the first was for the U.S. Seal), was the protectionist one—establishing tariffs of 50 percent on some sixty articles.

Later, when it was suggested that we import the steel for our transcontinental railroad, Abraham Lincoln refused, and a high tariff was imposed on steel. During the Depression, Roosevelt saved the family farm with subsidies and protective quotas. And it was President Eisenhower who placed quotas on oil. World War II was won mainly by the United States' industrial and agricultural might—might built with protectionism.

Today, we face a new threat. Since the end of the Cold War, four billion workers have been liberated from Communism and oppression. They are ready to work regardless of pay, safety, or the environment.

Our corporations and our competitors have been spoiled. They know that America doesn't enforce its trade laws. They know the president and the Congress are controlled by corporate money. Our economic strength has been fractured. We are losing production, technology, and market share. Today, this threatens a loss of the middle class, the weakening of our democracy—the loss of our security as a nation. The WTO system is a relic of a bygone era; its predecessor, GATT, required the United States to sustain concessions necessary to maintain the cohesion of the Western alliance during the Cold War. Today, the WTO puts our social contract in jeopardy, its one-size-fits-all capitalism threatens to destroy America's standard of living.

Don't be misled by the cry of "globalization." This is the chant of our corporate fifth column. Silicon Valley is not the answer. This is the crowd to whom the government gave the Internet; we trained them at Stanford and at Illinois, and now these billionaires want to eliminate the estate tax, the capital-gains tax, state tort laws, the antitrust laws. But the Internet doesn't provide enough jobs to build a nation; Microsoft, the number-one company in America, employs only 25,000 people. GM still employs 250,000.

We must rebuild. We must organize to do battle. Our job is to compete, to protect labor, to protect our environment, to protect our production—to protect America's standard of living. The free market won't do this. Only government will.

[Fiction]

ALL THAT IS SOLID MELTS INTO AIR

From Plowing the Dark, *a novel by Richard Powers, to be published next month by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. The following chapter describes a virtual-reality simulation of the global economy. Powers's previous novel was* Gain.

The room of economics runs into an open horizon. Every compass heading stretches so far that even walking flat-out, for hours, scrolls you only the smallest fraction against the landscape. Your inlet reveals itself to be but a bight on a cove on a lagoon on a bay on a gulf opening on to a measureless ocean, the one continuous Panthalassa, its waters linking up, its surf cutting the complex curve of these shores.

Light and shadow play upon the deep. The spills and splashes of geographic accident serve as this world's genes. Here woods work out of the local exchange rates. Gorse trades its stored energies with geese. Tundra warehouses whole quantities of carbon. Bottoms, morasses, moors, plateaus, and rain basins bargain in a river pidgin that keeps the dimples of microclimate in nutrients all year.

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Even its ceiling rises forever. High overhead, above the atmospheric tree line, past the edge where color thins out beyond blue, electronic kingfishers hover. Each beats its wings in blackness, fixed in place above its assigned coordinates. Stationary passenger pigeons, message-bearing corbies, each bird is but a bit in the widest imaginable linkup.

Perched in their geosynchronous orbits, the birds root out all data and beam it back down to the ground below. There, a trillion worker ants cull the factual wheat from its fallacious chaff, blind to the upshot of their tireless winnowing. The global economic simulator sieves out an answer in nanoseconds, in no time. This room can snare any fact you wish, faster than a gentled pointer can fetch your morning paper.

The cells of a continuous compound lens now cap the whole heavens above this ceiling. Near and far are as nothing. Scale is no issue. The Economics Room can zoom from the neighborhood fruit stand all the way up

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[illegible] at the Barry Bernstein Gallery in New York City

through the 67 annual letters. Its simulation needs to [illegible] market mystery vividly. To turn the market's enigmatic piano rolls into freewheeling [illegible] to throw open the global portfolio to public inspection, to [illegible] machine.

A commodity analyst [illegible] check, just above the horizon, paints an upturn in third-quarter commodities. A rose of starbursts means stubborn [illegible] Hidden relations spill [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Something is at work here, something momentous. You need only stand in mid-room and look. Once-in-a-lifetime headlines flower immodestly, poking up like shameless patches of crocuses in the unmown spring. Yet no image can say what this sprouting means. Import remains oblique, geological, obscure. Interpretation is a sleight of hand, reversing itself with each new read. Streams of bits combine to produce a pocket score, astonishing, symphonic, but too small to read.

The data are here, in surfeit. In fact, this flood of noise and color never abates long enough to submit to a basin. Events transpire too fast to register before they go obsolete. Who can take their eyes off the ticker long enough to tabulate?

But here you can eavesdrop on the chaos of voices. When that shipyard on the North Sea erupts again, you can examine the underlying inputs. Production as a function of hours. Hours as a function of volatility. Volatility as a function of morale. Morale as a function of expectation. Expectation as a function of income. Income as a function of production. This room combs out the Gordian tangle. Here you can watch the revolution unfold, at any speed, along any axis, at any magnification, testing each infinitesimal contingency's effect on every other.

The kingfisher satellites swoop down, hitting their minnowed marks. They snatch the silver data aloft, flapping in blackness, before dropping the catch back down to the globe's surface, where it replicates, shooting the rapids of broadband relays and repeaters, transmitter to transmitter, pooling ever more downstream, to school in the hatcheries of petabyte shoals.

In this room of open prediction, facts flash like a headland light. The search flares burst around you where you stand, lost in an informational fantasia: tangled graphical dances of devaluation, industrial upheaval, protective tariffs, striking shipbuilders, the G7, Paraguay, Kabul. The sweep of the digital—now beyond its inventors' collective ability to index—falls back, cowed by the sprawl of the runaway analog. Five billion parallel processors, each a world economy, update, revise, negate one another, capsize the simulation, pumping their dissatisfied gross national product beyond the reach of number.

This sea defeats all navigation. At best, the model can say only where in this, our flood, we will drown. Walk from this diorama on a May evening and feel the Earth's persistent fact gust against your face. Sure as this disclosing spring breeze, it blows. Data survive all hope of learning. But hope must learn how to survive the data.

[Perspectives]

SCENES FROM THE CRACK WARS

From two interviews with former drug dealers in the Winter issue of F.E.D.S. *magazine.* F.E.D.S. *("Finally, Every Dimension of the Streets") is published in New York City.*

F.E.D.S.: We want to know how you managed to become one of Harlem's great ones.

AZ: (*Pause.*) I never looked at myself like that. But I guess other people did. I wasn't trying to do that, but it happened.

F.E.D.S.: We have many hustlers, but we don't have many hustlers like you.

AZ: True, I played the game, I played the game fair, and I took the business seriously.

F.E.D.S.: And that business was?

AZ: Drugs. Cocaine, not crack. Straight cocaine. I started selling coke around late 1983, like in November.

F.E.D.S.: How old were you then?

AZ: About seventeen.

F.E.D.S.: Did you know Richard Porter at that time?

AZ: Yeah . . . we went to school together, he lived up the block from me. We grew up together, matter fact. At first I was working in the cleaners right across the street from where he lived at. Rich used to hustle on Amsterdam Avenue and 145th Street . . . and Rich wasn't selling what you would call real drugs at the time. He used to sell some shit to the white boys. I don't know where he learned it from, he ain't never tell me, but that shit used to work. He used to go to the supermarket and get a seasoning called sage and some eggs, take all the sage and put it in a bowl, then crack two eggs, mix it, put it in the oven, and let it cook. Then when it would get hard, he'd take it out and mash it down flat. Once it dried, it looked just like a drug that people smoked called hash. White boys used to come from Jersey, and Rich used to sell them pieces for like twenty, fifty dollars. He used to stay fresh like that, sheepskins, leather bombers.

F.E.D.S.: So where do you come into all of this?

AZ: After that, Rich started selling dope with L.A., on 144th Street.

F.E.D.S.: Where is L.A.?

AZ: L.A. is dead now . . . Young kid, Seventh Avenue. They would come to the cleaners bringing mad clothes. Crackin' jokes like, "Yo, A, you gotta stop fuckin' with the cleaners, you gotta get with this," but I was

content at the time. I knew if I wanted to get involved [illegible] I had the opportunity. I seen how they was rolling, they was rolling four, five [illegible] cars, the best of clothes... so basically every young kid in town wanted to be like Rich and L.A. Dirt [illegible] niggas.

What were your conditions at home?

AZ: My moms was on welfare, you know, sisters not going to school, welfare threatening to cut us off, and I was one that never liked to see my moms cry. That's why I started workin' in the cleaners.

My man Slim would buy shit from the liquor store like Wild Irish Rose, so on Sundays I would sell it out of the cleaners for double the price since the liquor store was closed, and that's when I started getting into the hustle game. It was short money, though.

Could this be around the time when you became affiliated with Alpo?

AZ: No, Alpo came later on, after Rich got locked up. Rich was in a shoot-out with this kid who robbed L.A.'s mother's house. Alpo and I start kickin' it, and he said, "Yo, Rich and I was doing something and since Rich been locked up I ain't got nowhere to get nothin' from." So after some words I told him, "I'll speak to Rich later on tonight. Come see me tomorrow, and if Rich say it's all good we'll take care of business." After talking to Rich, he said Alpo was cool, look out for him.

The relationship was, I gave him something on consignment and he would pay me back down the line. But he was the type that still wanted to hang out, come around. My store on 145th Street had become hot. The police was runnin' up in there every five minutes. It got to the point where the cops was comin' in asking for names. So I said, it's time to move on. I asked my clique who want that spot, and everybody was like, if you don't want it, we don't want it. But Alpo took it. He started making money, buying cars, big-ass jewelry. He bought a ring as big as a building that said ALPO in all diamond. He would buy cars to wreck, crash it or dent it, get off the bike, and just give it to [illegible] there. He was just [illegible] what he wanted to be, I guess. That big nigga.

I remember one time early on I was [illegible] to buy my girl a Volvo station wagon, and [illegible] this time. When I went into the dealership they had this new car that had just came out called the Impulse, and he was like, "Hey, that's hot, I want." So I said, "You want that?" I went to the trunk and I asked the guy for the keys. He was like, "Are you sure?" And I said, "Yeah, I'll write a check. Is it ready within the next couple of hours?" And I bought it for him.

You had seventeen thousand dollars in the trunk of your car?

AZ: I had about fifty thousand in the trunk of my car. After that it seemed like he would do anything I'd tell him to do. I was just doing it to make him happy, to show him that it's all good right here.

F.E.D.S.: You've said that Alpo did a lot of things that contributed to the downfall of Richard and yourself, as well as everything that you established in the streets.

AZ: Yeah, he became very annoying. If you a hustler and you know you doing wrong and you know it's against the law to sell drugs, you're not gonna be out there broadcasting it. But that's how Alpo was.

[illegible]: Where did Rich fit back into all of this?

AZ: Well, Rich was there, but that shit never bothered him. Rich used to be to his self. Rich was the type that would come out early and go in early, like around ten o'clock. He wasn't hangin' out and partyin'. He had like one girl and shit. He carried his self real respectable.

F.E.D.S.: What happened to Rich Porter and Alpo?

AZ: Well, Rich also remained in the game only to have his younger brother Donnell kidnapped and tortured. This went on for about a month, with the kidnappers asking for $500,000. This tragic event made the front of the *Daily News*. The kidnapper cut Rich's brother's finger off and taped it in a Harlem restaurant's bathroom.

F.E.D.S.: I thought you guys had the money.

AZ: Well, you know, shit happens.

[illegible]: So what happened after that?

AZ: Rich being hot by the Feds, he asked Alpo to move the joints for him. Well, this only gave Alpo opportunity.

F.E.D.S.: Opportunity for what?

AZ: Alpo had just recently found out that Rich had did him wrong on some other business.

So what happened?

AZ: Well, Alpo brought some D.C. kids here overnight and killed Rich near Orchard Beach.

How do you know Alpo did it?

AZ: The streets don't lie. The Feds finally caught Alpo, and he told on his killing team in order to spare an execution sentence.

When Alpo killed Rich, he killed Harlem.

[illegible] What's up? I tried reaching out to AZ, but he's been phone-ducking me.

F.E.D.S.: Ready to start?

ALEO: Yes.

F.E.D.S.: Before we begin, did you kill your good friend Richard Porter?

ALEO: Yes, but we'll get into that later.

F.E.D.S.: How did you get started?

ALEO: A Dominican connect needed two body guards. My man's man told him that we were wild, and if he had any problems we'd take care of them. That's when we started dealing with heavy coke.

When he found out I was Puerto Rican he liked it. This way he was able to put me in a room with Puerto Rican and Dominican customers who thought I was black. These customers would talk freely around me about jerking the Dominican, thinking I didn't understand them. Later I would tell him what they were saying, and we would handle the situation right there. All that boosted my position. When one of the guys that picked up the coke for the Dominican got caught stealing, I got his position. Although I was moving up in position my pay wasn't moving up, so I started dipping into the coke. There was so much coke I would steal like one, two, three eighths, whatever, and he never knew it was missing. So that was free money.

I had this free coke, and I was driving my man's car, so when this kid from Manhattan Avenue saw me he felt I was blowing up and told me I could do something over there. At the time, crack was beginning to blow up. So that's what I did. I started over there in 1983. Since I had the free coke, I was able to flood it and give up good prices. If something was selling for $20, I could sell the same size for $10. I was just giving it all away. I was getting money, and my name was blowing up more and more: I was the kid from the East Side that came to the West Side and was hitting all the women. They were calling me wild and crazy. I was just bugging out. I was just having fun. After a while things started slowing up for my man. Soon the whole thing faded out, but I had made such a name for myself that other people in the crack game were like, "Sell this for us."

I remember before I even came to the West Side it was all about Rich and L.A. Rich always said I reminded him of L.A. Time went on and I met a crew while hanging out at the Rooftop skating rink. They knew my thing was strong. I was able to really bank on that. They were doing their thing with crack really blowing up. So I ended up stepping to them. They hit me off, and I took that back down to 115th Street. Now I was getting it from three or four different people, and I wasn't jerking anybody. Everybody was getting paid. I built really good relationships because I was about business.

I heard AZ was a young cat that was getting it. So I stepped to him. That was when he had 145th between Seventh and Eighth, the Jukebox. One night some kids tried to shoot him, stick him up or something. He was telling me, and he was getting more and more frustrated. I was like, "Yeah, whatever. What are you gonna do?" He wanted to find them. I just needed fifteen or twenty minutes to go to the East Side and get my guns. So while I did this his workers were supposed to go get whatever they had. When I get back it's only one guy there. I notice AZ didn't say anything. I came back with two guns. We ended up finding one of the kids and busted him up. After that day I was running with AZ, and now I'm down with him. I'm one of his soldiers. I see opportunity, and I know this is where I need to be. AZ is who I need to work with, he's the one I need to impress. I had no problem with the grind. I started from the bottom.

Now the Jukebox is getting popular and the stick-up kids are starting to come out. They robbed the spot. That was beginning to be a problem for AZ. He wasn't with all that. The kids would come in, close the gate, and rob everything. No one ever got shot. I stepped to AZ like, "We got to put the murder game down!" We found out who was setting it up and snatched him. Threw him in a van and made him tell us who the rest of them were. I recruited a few guys and we took care of them. The bodies were found on 145th and Eighth Avenue. That's when AZ felt it just wasn't worth it to him. And I took over the Jukebox.

Then this kid from 115th Street started opening spots on 145th Street. He was jealous, so a little gunplay broke out. I left 145th, and that's when my relationship with Rich started. Rich was just coming home from doing a year in prison. Rich, AZ, and I were all doing our own thing. Rich and I used to have a lot of the same cars. We were the first young kids to bust out with the convertible BMWs. AZ and I busted out with the 7 Series BMW. I paid cash. We both bought black ones, and he asked me to change my color. I paid an extra $500 and I busted out with the white one with blue leather seats. The joints were hot and we were the first young guys out there with them. They cost $55,000 at the time.

I was in with Rich, and I was in with AZ. I know AZ didn't like Rich and Rich didn't like AZ. AZ thought Rich was too extravagant and Rich thought AZ was a punk. Rich

also had a problem with AZ opening a spot right across from him on 132nd Street. Rich was selling crack and AZ was selling powder coke. Rich didn't appreciate that, but AZ had a daughter by Rich's sister Pat. Rich didn't care about any of them. If he did, when his brother got kidnapped he wouldn't have been trying to make a deal.

F.E.D.S.: Why was Rich killed?

ALPO: Rich — The reason I killed Rich is because I had a young Dominican connect off Broadway who wasn't really in the position at the time I was dealing with him to front me crazy bricks. Since my connect couldn't do it, Rich used a kid that he had met in the Bronx, and he was hitting him lovely. Then the kid caught a dry spell. So since I was going in and out of town, I told Rich, "I'm going to introduce you to my connect." What I said was, "You take your money and I'll give you my money. Take care of it." I didn't mind it Rich made $1,000 a brick off me with his man. I was coming in with about $500,000 at a time, even though my connect was sometimes cheaper, but Rich never tells me he's using my connect. He's giving Rich the joints at an even cheaper price.

One day I'm in New York looking for this kid that ran off with about $190,000, and I run into my connect. I ask him when he's going to start looking out for us. He tells me he just gave Rich sixty joints and at least thirty were mine. I said, "No you didn't!" So he describes them to me. I remember they had a president's name on them. I told him not to say anything about it. I take my bricks back down to D.C. that I had just gotten from Rich and went to see my man down there. He was also my best customer, and he was about his murder game.

I went back and told him what Rich did. The first thing to come out of his mouth is, "Let's kill him!" I was like, hold up for a minute. Let me think about it. I called Rich and asked him, "Is everything all right? Is your man back?" He said, "Yeah. My man just gave me some more joints."

Me and my man in D.C. come back to New York. I said, "I'm going to ask him one more time who he's getting this coke from. If he lies, I'm gonna take him out." One thing left to another, and I killed Rich.

Yes, I killed Rich. It wasn't personal. It was business. Rich lied to me about something that was trivial to me. It was a little bit of money that came between what I thought was a wonderful relationship, there's no telling what he might do down the line. I gave him the opportunity to tell me the truth, not once but twice. My man shot him I think two times and he didn't die, so I shot him. I think he felt something, because I had to pry his hand off the doorknob. Then we went to City Island to dump the body.

F.E.D.S.: You carried the body from Harlem to City Island in the Bronx?

ALPO: Yes.

F.E.D.S.: You weren't afraid?

ALPO: Once you take care of that first murder in your life, you're all right. Not that I'm saying it's a good thing. It's just that I wasn't afraid. I was doing what I had to do.

F.E.D.S.: How many homicides are you charged with?

ALPO: I'm charged with fourteen murders.

F.E.D.S.: Which ones?

ALPO: Eight in D.C., two in Maryland, and the rest in New York.

F.E.D.S.: How did the Feds find out about your fourteen homicides?

ALPO: Me, I had to confess everything for my deal. Once you take the position I've taken, you have to tell it all. If there comes a time later on that they find out about something else, whatever agreement they gave, they could take me back to court. For the four murders in New York I basically got immunity. They just added them to the D.C. murders.

F.E.D.S.: What was one of the most gruesome murders?

ALPO: (*Long pause.*) There were so many . . . Most of ours were quick, though. Ours were just to the head.

F.E.D.S.: No one ever found the cars with blood in them?

ALPO: Well, as far as the vehicle with Rich, I changed the whole interior. After that I sold it to my connect.

I want to take this opportunity to clear two rumors. One is that I'm dying of AIDS in prison. This is false. I'm healthier than I have ever been. The other is that 'Po is snitching. If that's what you want to call it, that's what you call it. But 'Po calls it looking out for 'Po. I'm doing what I have to do for me. Also, for the people who say 'Po went out like a sucker. In life you make choices, and sometimes those choices are good and sometimes they're bad. At the time when I did what I did, I had to do for me. I knew it wasn't right, but I knew I had to do it for me. In my eight years in prison I have come to the decision that I made the right choice. First off, the government wasn't dealing with me on a ten- or twenty-year bid. They wanted to give me the death penalty or the rest of my natural life in jail. Unless you're facing that, don't judge me.



Stance, *a painting by Paul Mullins. His work will be shown this summer at the Ambrosino Gallery in Miami.*

[Chat]

THE MAD H4X0RS

From a February 8 exchange on "goonies," a channel on the Internet Relay Chat system, that was intercepted by computer security experts at Stanford University and at Secnuity, a consulting firm, in the midst of a series of "denial of service" attacks on major commercial Web sites. Dennis Moran, known online as Coolio, was arrested in March and charged with defacing the Web site of D.A.R.E., an antidrug organization. Moran denies any involvement with the denial-of-service attacks.

Coolio: nice and quiet around here . . . why is cnn.com not working?

Dr_Hydn: THANKS FOR DESTROYING MY NEWS COOLIO.

Coolio: hey i didn't do anything to cnn. i enjoy their news.

Dr_Hydn: uh huh wink wink nudge nudge

manero: knock that shit off, for real.

dwango: is ebay still being flooded?

Coolio: they took it down.

SpEcTrE: the mad hax0rs moved on, whoever the evildoers may be.

dwango: amazon.com is down . . . and cnn, haha. these h4x0rs are mean.

Coolio: i don't think the same hackers that did yahoo had anything to do with cnn.

DemonEatr: they heard what happened to yahoo yesterday, so they decided to copy it.

dwango: did they have anything to do with amazon.com?

Coolio: yes they did, since 45 minutes ago.

SpEcTrE: dude, CNN is back for me.

Coolio: good. cnn shouldn't go down. they're cool

dwango: it's slow.

[illegible] has joined #goonies

[illegible] has quit [Connection reset by peer]

psilord: hahaha, coolio made ABC world news tonight. jesus fucking christ. how the f . . .

Coolio: what 'ABC world news tonight' also, what the fuck is this zq motherfucker?

psilord: Coolio, ABC's world news television show, every night.

Coolio: cool what'd they say?

dwango: haha, it's their network news show, coolio.

psilord: coolio, what did you do that is getting so much attention?

Coolio: and did they only talk about yahoo or buycom and ebay and amazon too?

* aforce has joined #goonies.

Dr_Hydin: coolio, did you fuck up aol?

dwango: is amazon back up now?

Coolio: aforce, peon identification required.

aforce: sup?

Coolio: who are you?

Dr_Hydin: NAME RANK AND PENIS LENGTH NOW MISTER

aforce: phifli used to chill with you?

Coolio: who the hell is phifli?

psilord: aforce, who the fuck are you?

Desantnik: seems aforce is going to Stanford. Jesse from Saved By the Bell wanted to go there.

psilord: aforce, go away or coolio will h4x0r you.

Coolio: hahahah

aforce: he he

dwango: hahah

psilord: HAhahahahah

psilord: "when we return, YAHOO IS VULNERABLE! hackers ambush the website"

aforce: please :)

psilord: coolio, the story is coming up.

Coolio: tell me what they say.

shiro: they just had this bit story, with this big logo saying "HACK ATTACK"

dwango: haha. the zdtv just acknowledged that amazon was down.

[illegible] on TV? awesome

aforce: who hit amazon? i thought only yahoo got hacked

Coolio: wait, who is aforce?

aforce: nobody knows

Coolio: he's a spy.

defile: yeah, he FBI

aforce: spy? naw.

Coolio: no fbi allowed. hey, two stanford.edu people joined in a short period of time . . . and we're talking about yahoo . . .

psilord: "we have learned more about the catastrophic crash of yahoo today

desantnik: psilord, where is this?

psilord: small one on local news

Dr_Hydin: hahahahahahahahahahahahahahah

psilord: "a concerted effort by a group of hackers"

psilord: "a large number of computers gang up on the yahoo infrastructure."

shiro: fucking great.

psilord: "the tools are so sophisticated that you don't even have to be very good at hacking."

Coolio: hahahah, this guy is trying to join our hacker group.

Dr_Hydin: hahaha, we're a hacker group now.

defile: did we suddenly become a hacker group?

psilord: actually, coolio is a hacker group. ahahah. "if it could happen to yahoo, it could happen to anyone on the web." HAHAhah. "it could happen to you!!!"

Desantnik: This age of the internet is like the wild west, if all the cowboys were pathetic pasty white geeks and they rounded up D&D posters and hot pockets instead of cows.

psilord: oh my god, coolio is way famous.

psilord: dude, coolio, sitting at his computer, with his cock in his hand, disabled yahoo, and fooled people into thinking he was a group of fucking hackers.

psilord: how the f . . . coolio shouldn't be allowed to have this kind of power.

Coolio: SHUT THE FUCK UP PSILORD.

psilord: hahahahah

Coolio: a group of malicious coordinated hackers did it. not coolio.

Dr_Hydin: no mexican can do this.

psilord: yeah, i was just kidding.

aforce: what did you use?

Coolio: i didn't do anything.

aforce: a router sploit?

defile: uhm. who is aforce?

Coolio: nor am i doing anything now.

aforce: heh

Coolio: hackers did it.

aforce: ok

Coolio: defile, i have no idea, probably the FBI.

aforce: dood i'm not fbi.

defile: aforce, what brings you to these here parts anyway?

instig8r: we don't come kindly to strangers.

aforce: blenny told me it was a 133t channel . . . i used to chill in #coded and #abusive.

instig8r: who is blenny?

Coolio: are you sure he didn't say #gaynies?

defile: uhm, who the hell is blenny?

aforce: blenny used to be in gH . . .

Coolio: we don't know anyone from gH.

Coolio: nor any other hacker groups.

Desantnik: aforce has cracks in his story.

defile: we usually talk about gay sex.

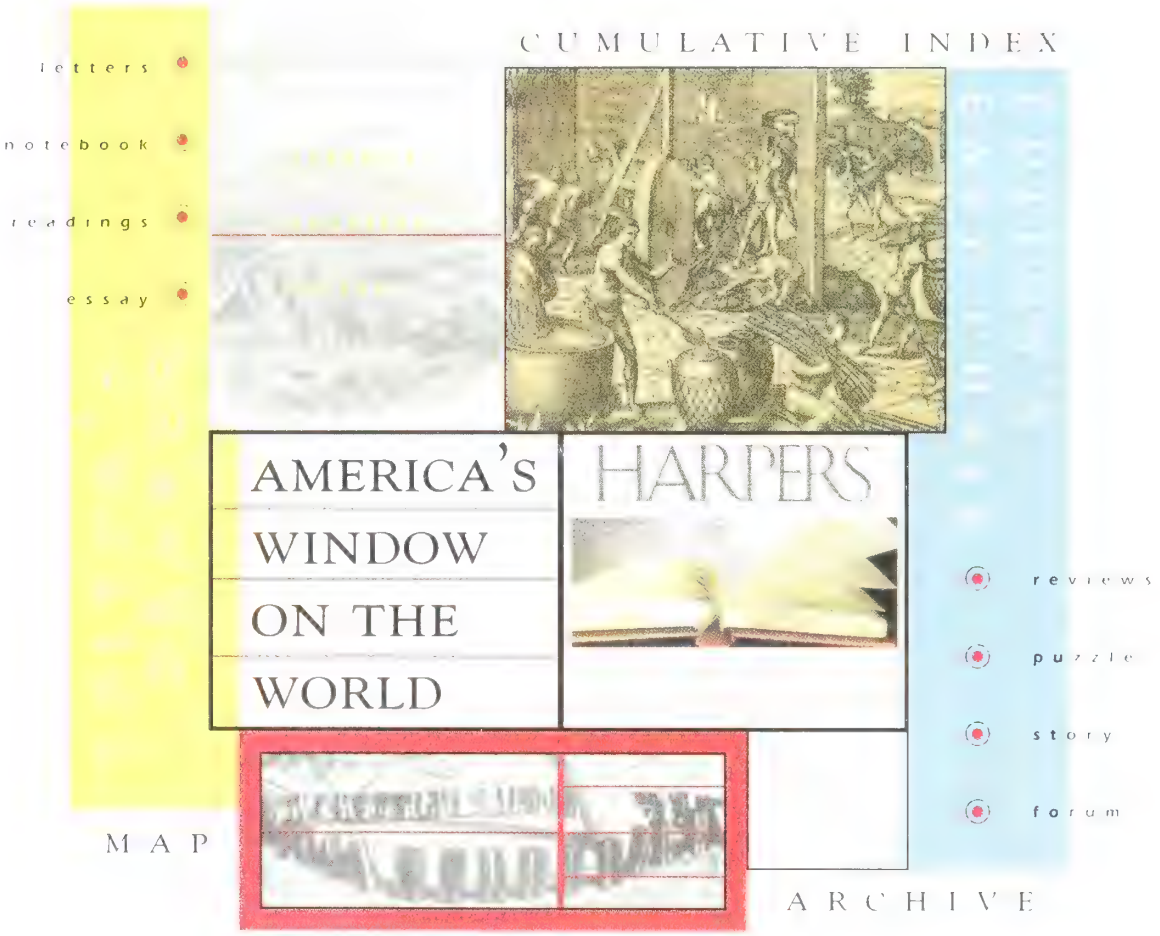
aforce: heh

instig8r: qazew, want to have gay sex?

qazew: sure.

defile: i bet FBI agents have massive child porn collections.

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aforce: he just said he did.

aforce: i'm looking for a new chan to chill in. #cc is full of fucking feds.

aforce: then i will make sure i don't admit to breaking the law. :(

aforce: INCORRECT PEON IDENTIFICATION. PEON IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED

durango: please what?

qazew: aw sweet . . .

qazew: you guys are too paranoid. it's not like any of us did anything illegal other than child porn and drugs.

SpEcTrE: the word on the street is that YAHOO is getting owned again.

qazew: SpEcTrE, hehe, are you trying to say that you're fucking with them?

SpEcTrE: no, not me dude.

qazew: SpEcTrE, who but amazon, ebay, etc.?

Dr Hydm: i only owned 1 on dude. at least he says he did.

qazew: SpEcTrE, you bullshitting or really think adx did it?

SpEcTrE: i think it was a faction of communist cabal.

qazew: SpEcTrE, you bullshitting or really think adx did it?

SpEcTrE: i mean attempt to thwart our capitalist system.

Dr Hydm: personally i think Mahir got pissed off at the net in general and is sitting at home with a big bottle of tequila in his hand, hax0ring away, yelling I FUCK YOU!!! at no one in particular.

friend were playing the video game that was the state of the art at the time, Sonic the Hedgehog. They jumped around in front of the TV and gave off the sort of rude noises boys tend to make when they're shooting at things in a video game, and after about half an hour they stopped and tried to talk about what they'd just been doing. The dialogue went something like this:

"I wiped out at that part with the ladders."

"Ladders? What ladders?"

"You know, after the rooms."

"Oh, you mean the stairs?"

"No, I think they were ladders. I remember, because I died there twice."

"I never killed you around any ladders. I killed you where you jump down off this wall."

"Wall? You mean by the gates of the city?"

"Are there gates around the city? I always called it the castle."

The boys muddled along for several more minutes, making themselves more confused as they went. Finally they gave up trying to talk about their time with Sonic the Hedgehog. They just looked at each other and shrugged.

I didn't think about the two boys and Sonic again until I watched my clients try out the World Wide Web. By then it was 1995, the Internet as we know it was beginning to exist, but the two women who worked for my client, whom I'd just helped get online, had never before connected to the Internet or surfed the Web. They took to it instantly, each disappearing into nearly an hour of obsessive clicking, after which they tried to talk about it:

"It was great! I clicked that thing and went to this place. I don't remember its name."

"Yeah. It was a link. I clicked here and went there."

"Oh, I'm not sure it was a link. The thing I clicked was a picture of the library."

"Was it the library? I thought it was a picture of City Hall."

"Oh, no. I'm sure it was the library."

"No, City Hall. I'm sure because of the dome."

"Dome? Was there a dome?"

Right then I remembered Sonic and the two boys; my clients, like the two boys, had experienced something pleasurable and engaging, and they very much wanted to talk about it—talking being one of the primary ways human beings augment their pleasure. But what had happened to them, each in her own electronic world, resisted description. Like the boys, the two women fell into verbal confusion. How could they speak coherently about a world full of little wordless pictograms, about trails that led off in all directions, of idle visits to virtual places chosen on a whim-click?

Following hyperlinks on the Web is like the

[Home]

THE MUSEUM OF ME

From "Wonder Years: Growing Up At Home: The Internet and the Myth of the Powerful Self," by [illegible] Harper's Magazine. [illegible] engineer and the author of Close to the Machine: [illegible] *in the August 1998 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

Y[illegible] the Internet as we know it [illegible] I think it was [illegible] where her nine-year-old son and his

synaptic drift of dreams, a loosening of intention, the mind associating freely, an experience that can be compelling or baffling or unsettling, or all of those things at once. And like dreams, the experience of the Web is intensely private, charged with immanent meaning for the person inside the experience, but often confusing or irrelevant to someone else.

At the time, I had my reservations about the Web, but not so much about the private, dreamlike state it offered. Web surfing seemed to me not so much antisocial as asocial, an adventure like a video game or pinball, entertaining, sometimes interesting, sometimes a trivial waste of time; but in a social sense it seemed harmless, since only the person engaged in the activity was affected.

Something changed, however, not in me but in the Internet and the Web and in the world, and the change was written out in person-high letters on a billboard on the corner of Howard and New Montgomery Streets in San Francisco. It was the fall of 1998. I was walking toward Market Street one afternoon when I saw it, a background of brilliant sky blue, with writing on it in airy white letters, which said: *now the world really does revolve around you.* The letters were lower-case, soft-edged, spaced irregularly, as if they'd been skywritten over a hot August beach and were already drifting off into the air. The message they left behind was a child's secret wish, the ultimate baby-world narcissism we are all supposed to abandon when we grow up: the world really does revolve around me.

What was this billboard advertising? Perfume? A resort? There was nothing else on it but the airy, white letters, and I had to walk right up to it to see a URL written at the bottom; it was the name of a company that makes semiconductor equipment, machinery used by companies like Intel and AMD to manufacture integrated circuits. Oh, chips, I thought. Computers. Of course. What other subject produces such hyperbole? Who else but someone in the computer industry could make such a shameless appeal to individualism?

The billboard loomed over the corner for the next couple of weeks. Every time I passed it, its message irritated me more. It bothered me the way the "My Computer" icon bothers me on the Windows desktop, baby names like "My Yahoo" and "My Snap"; my, my, my; two-year-old talk; infantilizing and condescending.

But there was something more disturbing about this billboard, and I tried to figure out why, since it simply was doing what every other piece of advertising does: whispering in your ear that there is no one like you in the entire world, and what we are offering is for you, special you, and you alone. What came to me was this. Toyota, for example, sells their latest to special, individual buyer ("It's not for everyone, just for you"), but chip makers, through the medium of the Internet and the World Wide Web, are creating the actual infrastructure of an individualized marketplace.

What had happened between 1995, when I could still think of the Internet as a private dream, and the appearance of that billboard in 1998 was the near-complete commercialization of the Web. And that commercialization had proceeded in a very particular and single-minded way: by attempting to isolate the individual within a sea of economic activity. Through a process known as "disintermediation," producers have worked to remove the expert intermediaries, agents, brokers, middlemen, who until now have influenced our interactions with the commercial world. What bothered me about the billboard, then, was that its message was not merely hype but the reflection of a process that was already under way: an attempt to convince the individual that a change currently being visited upon him or her is a good thing, the purest form of self, the equivalent of freedom. The world really does revolve around you.

In Silicon Valley, in Redmond, Washington, the home of Microsoft, and in the smaller silicon alleys of San Francisco and New York, "disintermediation" is a word so common that people shrug when you try to talk to them about it. Oh, disintermediation, that old thing. Everyone already knows about that. It has become accepted wisdom, a process considered inevitable, irrefutable, good.

I've long believed that the ideas embedded in technology have a way of percolating up and outward into the nontechnical world at large, and that technology is made by people with intentions and, as such, is not neutral. In the case of disintermediation, an explicit and purposeful change is being visited upon the structure of the global marketplace. And in a world so dominated by markets, I don't think I go too far in saying that this will affect the very structure of reality, for the Net is no longer simply a zone of personal freedoms, a pleasant diversion from what we used to call "real life"; it has become an actual marketplace that is changing the nature of real life itself.

Removal of the intermediary. All those who stand in the middle of a transaction, whether financial or intellectual: out! Brokers and agents and middlemen of every description: good-bye! Travel agents, real-estate agents, insurance agents, stockbrokers, mortgage brokers, consolidators, and jobbers, all the scrappy percentniks who troll the bywaters of capitalist exchange—who needs you? All those hard-

survive immediate [illegible] to [illegible] and the lower middle [illegible] to convert into ideal of capitalism [illegible] too small for the big guys to worry about—find yourself some other way [illegible] small retailers and store clerks [illegible] Even [illegible] chiropractors, [illegible] Even the professional handlers of intellectual goods, anyone who sifts through information, books, paintings, knowledge [illegible] and summing up—librarians, book reviewers, curators, disc jockeys, teachers, editors, analysts—why trust anyone but yourself to make judgments about what is more or less interesting, valuable, authentic, or worthy of your attention? No one, no professional interloper, is supposed to come between you and your desires, which, according to this idea, are nuanced, difficult to communicate, irreducible, unique.

The Web did not cause disintermediation, but it is what we call an "enabling technology"—a technical breakthrough that takes a difficult task and makes it suddenly feasible, easy. It opens the door to change, which then comes in an unprecedented, breathless rush.

We are living through an amazing experiment: an attempt to construct a capitalism without salespeople, to take a system founded upon the need to sell ever greater numbers of goods to ever growing numbers of people, and to do this without the most professional distribution channels—without buildings, sidewalks, shops, luncheonettes, street vendors, buses, trams, taxis, other women in the fitting room to tell you how you look in something and to help you make up your mind, without street people panhandling, Santas ringing bells at Christmas, shop women with their perfect makeup and elegant clothes, fashionable men and women strolling by to show you the latest look—in short, an attempt to do away with the city in all its messy stimulation, to abandon the agora for home and hearth, where it is safe and everything can be controlled.

The first task in this newly structured capitalism is to convince consumers that the services formerly performed by myriad intermediaries are useless or worse, that those commissioned brokers and agents are incompetent, out for themselves, dishonest. And the next task is to glorify the notion of self-service. Where companies once vied for your business by telling you about their courteous people and how well they would serve you—"Avis, We Try Harder"—their job now is to make you believe that only you can take care of yourself. The lure of personal service that was dangled before the middle classes, momentarily making us all feel almost as lucky as the rich, is being withdrawn. In the Internet age, under the pressure of globalized capitalism and its slimmed-down profit margins, only the very wealthy will be served by actual human beings. The rest of us must make do with Web pages, and feel happy about it.

[Prayer]

YEA, THOUGH I DOWNLOAD PAMELA ANDERSON LEE

[illegible] Prayer [illegible] to the Internet that is supposed to be sent [illegible] at midnight Online. St. Isidore is the proposed patron saint of the Internet.

[illegible]
luring our journeys through the Internet
[illegible]
Amen.

One evening while I was watching television, I looked up to see a commercial that seemed to me to be the most explicit statement of the ideas implicit in the disintermediated universe. I gaped at it, because usually such ideas are kept implicit, hidden behind symbols. But this commercial was like the sky-blue billboard: a shameless and naked expression of the Web world, a glorification of the self, at home, alone.

It begins with a drone, a footstep in a puddle, then a ragged band pulling a dead car through the mud—road warriors with bandanas around their foreheads carrying braziers. Now we see rafts of survivors floating before the ruins of a city, the sky dark, red-tinged, as if fires were burning all around us, just over the horizon. Next we are outside the dead city's library, where stone lions, now coated in gold and come to life, rear up in despair. Inside the library, red-coated Fascist guards encircle the readers at the table. A young girl turns a page, loudly, and the guards say, "Shush!" in time to their march-

step. We see the title of the book the girl is reading: *Paradise Lost*. The bank, too, is a scene of ruin. A long line snakes outside it in a dreary rain. Inside, the teller is a man with a white, spectral face, who gazes upon the black spider that is slowly crawling up his window. A young woman's face ages right before us, and in response, in ridicule, the bank guard laughs. The camera now takes us up over the roofs of this post-apocalyptic city. Lightning crashes in the dark, red-tinged sky. On a telephone pole, where the insulators should be, are skulls.

Cut to a cartoon of emerald-green grass, hills, a Victorian house with a white picket fence and no neighbors. A butterfly flaps above it. What a relief this house is after the dreary, dangerous, ruined city. The door to this charming house opens, and we go in to see a chair before a computer screen. Yes, we want to go sit in that chair, in that room with candy-orange walls. On the computer screen, running by in teasing succession, are pleasant virtual reflections of the world outside: written text, a bank check, a telephone pole, which now signifies our connection to the world. The camera pans back to show a window, a curtain swinging in the breeze, and our sense of calm is complete. We hear the Intel-Inside jingle, which sounds almost like chimes. Cut to the legend: Packard Bell. Wouldn't you rather be at home?

In sixty seconds, this commercial communicates a worldview that reflects the ultimate suburbanization of existence: a retreat from the friction of the social space to the supposed idyll of private ease. It is a view that depends on the idea that desire is not social, not stimulated by what others want, but generated internally, and that the satisfaction of desires is not dependent upon other persons, organizations, structures, or governments. It is a profoundly libertarian vision, and it is the message that underlies all the mythologizing about the Web: the idea that the civic space is dead, useless, dangerous. The only place of pleasure and satisfaction is your home. You, home, family; and beyond that, the world. From the intensely private to the global, with little in between but an Intel processor and a search engine.

In this sense, the ideal of the Internet represents the very opposite of democracy, which is a method for resolving differences in a relatively orderly manner through the mediation of unavoidable civil associations. Yet there can be no notion of resolving differences in a world where each person is entitled to get exactly what he or she wants. Here all needs and desires are equally valid and equally powerful. I'll get mine and you'll get yours; there is no need for compromise and discussion. I don't have to tolerate you, and you don't have to tolerate me. We need not [illegible] rigmarole of government with all its creaky, bothersome structures. There's no need for any of this, because now that we have the World Wide Web the problem of the pursuit of happiness has been solved! We'll each click for our individual joys, and our only dispute may come if something doesn't get delivered on time. Wouldn't you really rather be at home?

But who can afford to stay at home? Only the very wealthy or a certain class of knowledge worker can stay home and click. On the other side of this ideal of work-anywhere freedom (if indeed it is freedom never to be away from work) is the reality that somebody had to make the thing you ordered with a click. Somebody had to put it in a box, fill the paperwork, carry it to you. The reality is a world divided not only between the haves and have-nots but between the ones who get to stay home and everyone else, the ones who deliver the goods to them.

The Net ideal represents a retreat not only from political life but also from culture—from that tumultuous conversation in which we try to talk to one another about our shared experiences. As members of a culture, we see the same movie, read the same book, hear the same string quartet. Although it is difficult for us to agree on what we might have seen, read, or heard, it is out of that difficult conversation that real culture arises. Whether or not we come to an agreement or understanding, even if some decide that understanding and meaning are impossible, we are still sitting around the same campfire.

But the Web as it has evolved is based on the idea that we do not even want a shared experience. The director of San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art once told an audience that we no longer need a building to house works of art; we don't need to get dressed, go downtown, walk from room to room among crowds of other people. Now that we have the Web, we can look at anything we want whenever we want, and we no longer need him or his curators. "You don't have to walk through *my* idea of what's interesting to look at," he said to a questioner in the audience named Bill. "On the Web," said the director, "you can create the museum of Bill."

And so, by implication, there can be the museums of George and Mary and Helene. What then will this group have to say to one another about art? Let's say the museum of Bill is featuring early Dutch masters, the museum of Mary is playing video art, and the museum of Helene is displaying French tapestries. In this privatized world, what sort of "cultural" conversation can there be? What can one of us possibly say to another about our experience except, "Today I visited the museum of me, and I liked it."









NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND

Among the radicals of the Pacific Northwest

By David Samuels

Outside the air is thin and cold, and behind the porthole-shaped sheets of double-thick Plexiglas the landscape of northern California looks like a string of yellow Christmas lights floating on a featureless sea. Inside the cabin, at a height of 30,000 feet, my tray table has been stowed in its upright and locked position, and a drawn but efficient-looking stewardess in a navy-blue jacket has brought me a plastic cup of water with ice. I sip the water and look out the window and admire the millennial promise of soaring markets and ever more amazing technological advances written on the ground below. No one will ever be lonely. No one will ever be bored. Here are tens of millions of plugged-in Americans, driving cars, turning lights on and off, sitting at home in front of television sets and personal computers, accessing the new-age bounty of Microsoft and Cisco Systems, eBay, Hotmail, and Yahoo!



The red light flashes overhead, and the plane descends 25,000 feet in only a few minutes through the bad-weather clouds that muffle the runways of Portland, Oregon, six months out of the year. The optimistic tenor of my airborne thoughts is darkened by a sudden burst of paranoia, triggered by the noise of the engines and air filters, the flicker of the in-flight movie screens, and the blurry stares of my fellow passengers as oxygen levels in the cabin decline. It is the modern-day equivalent of a belief in magic, I am thinking, the expectation that in a minute or so the plane will touch down lightly on the rain-slicked runway in Portland instead of exploding in midair. If a blind trust in the operation of complex technological systems is a necessary part of modern life, it has only recently become the rule. Twenty years ago, most Americans could still fix their own cars. Not too long before that, you could listen to voices talking over the air at night from New York or London on a radio set that you made at home. The wing of the plane is silhouetted against a bank of heavy gray fog, and jutting out from the edge are antennae transmitting data relating to the speed of the plane and the angle of descent. Inscribed on the wing is a black-bordered warning, "Do not walk outside this area."

Outside the Greyhound station in Portland, a knot of six or seven dispossessed-looking men stand in the rain smoking cigarettes, waiting to board the bus to Eugene. The nylon gym bags at their feet advertise the brand names of Adidas and Nike. After thirteen hours in the air, I am happy to get on the bus and sit in the dark, the nighttime conversation washing over me like the sound of a television set coming through the walls of a neighboring apartment. Every few minutes the channel changes. There is the blonde woman behind me, who left home at fifteen and who is now twenty-five and who ordered grilled-cheese sandwiches at

David Samuels is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine. *His article "Kool-Aid Days" appeared in the November 1999 issue. He is at work on a novel.*

by [illegible] children. She is leaving town to live with her mother and escape her old man. Behind her is a pretty girl in a red flannel shirt, a long-haired traveler, a [illegible] and a well-muscled guy with a shaved head and bulldog features. [illegible] nylon sweat suit whispers in the dark whenever he moves. "He is a known drug user with a known propensity for violence," he reads out loud from a copy of a restraining order [illegible] girlfriend. He has lost everything he owns, including a split-level ranch home worth $146,000, and he is headed [illegible]. His nylon sweat suit is emblazoned with the Nike swoosh.



Eugene, Oregon, is a [illegible] town in the Willamette River Valley, forty minutes by car to the Oregon coast and an equal distance from the [illegible]. The Greyhound there from Portland takes approximately two and a [illegible] and [illegible] to the [illegible] and tall [illegible] on the [illegible] and still [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

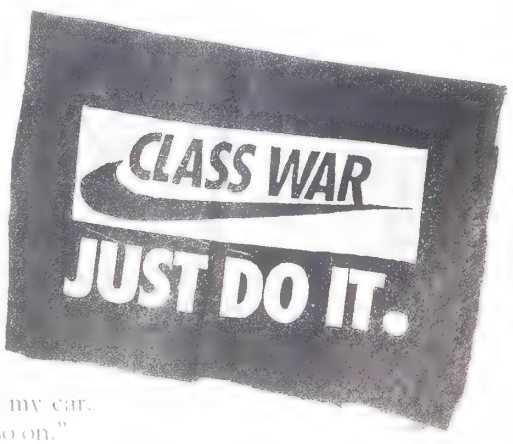
ugene's anarchists were no longer exactly a
al concern. "The Black Bloc was a loosely or
anized cluster of affinity groups and individu
ls who roamed around downtown," a
communiqué from the NOMI Collective later
xplained, "pulled this way by a cultural-lo and
gnificant storefront and that way by the relat
ta police formation." Using spray paint, lime
nots, sledgehammers, crowbars, paint balls,
gs filled with glass etching solution, and oth
r devices, the black-masked demonstrators at
icked storefronts bearing the logos of brand
ame corporations. Their message was a
pirited blend of radical environmentalism,
eftist anticapitalist sentiment, and slacker dis-
ain for consumer culture. Their targets includ-
d "Levi's (whose overpriced products are made
a sweatshops), McDonald's (slave-wage fast-
ood peddlers responsible for destruction of
ropical rainforests . . .), Starbucks (peddlers of
n addictive substance . . . harvested at below-
overty wages . . .), Warner Brothers (media
nonopolists), [and] Planet Hollywood (for be-
ng Planet Hollywood)."

What the pictures from Seattle captured was
n anger whose true sources had less to do with
Nike's treatment of its labor force or other ob-
ectionable practices than with a broader, more
unreasoning sense of being trapped in a net. My
avorite picture from Seattle showed a group of
ids perched on top of the entrance to Nike
Town, using hammers and chisels to pry off the
brushed-steel letters that spelled "Nike." At
east one of the kids was wearing a pair of Nike
neakers. The picture was powerful because it so
ccurately captured an emotion shared by many
people in their twenties and thirties, raised on
dvertisements whose carefully screened and
ocus-grouped vocabularies and images have in-
inuated themselves into the weave of the gen-
rational unconscious almost since birth.

You can't help wanting Nike sneakers. At
he same time, the desire to smash the windows
f NikeTown makes sense, too. Not because
Nike sneakers are bad, or because they are
manufactured in Third World countries by
lave-wage labor, but on the more general prin-
iple that someone should be held responsible
or the feelings of absence and compulsion that
verwhelm us all at some point or another in
our lives and that are not our fault, or even the
ault of our parents, but are rather the products
f the addictive vacuum that has manifested it
elf through the combined karmic energies of
millions of cathode-ray tubes and digital cables.
The advertisements on-screen—the Steadicam
hots of strong healthy bodies, of children
wimming and laughing in the Technicolor
playgrounds of Aetna, and of twenty-some-
hings in khaki swing-dancing for the Gap—
become powerful magnets for human desires,
for health, human companionship, good times,
and eternal consolation. Advertisements are
secular prayers. And when our prayers aren't
answered, the spiritual energies released by so
many unmet desires focused on a single photo-
graph or frame of film can result in a kind of
corporate-sponsored low-pressure system, a
Bermuda Triangle of the emotions, where hu-
man inhabitants feel lonely, pathetic, and
alone. Sitting at home alone in their under-
wear on Saturday night listening to the high-
pitched whistling sound of 56K modems mat-
ing in the static-filled void, they hope to
reconcile their irreconcilable need for human
connectedness through acts of prayerful atten-
tion, like playing high-resolution Sega video
games, watching cable television, and checking
out the freshest new porn sites on
the Web.

The Whiteaker neighborhood, where most young radicals in Eugene live, is a working-class district of 6,000 people, with a 20 percent minority population and perhaps an equal number of radically inclined bohemians in their twenties and early thirties. Because of the city's location west of the Cascades, the temperature in Eugene rarely falls below thirty-five degrees, but the darkness and the damp combine to make it seem much colder. The rain begins in late October and lasts through the end of April. The streets are usually covered in fog, and the sky is gray for six months out of the year.

In the Whiteaker Police Sub-Station Officer Ted Schneider sits at his desk and tries to explain what has happened to the neighborhood where he lives. A stoop-shouldered man whose liquid eyes and sensitive features make him an unlikely candidate for police work in most parts of the country, he still vividly remembers the moment when the slippage began. "When it first went sideways for me," he says, "was two years ago, when somebody, a self-titled anarchist, decided to attack me personally, as a representative of the Police Department and of their own projections of what police represent in the world. That involved smashing my windshield, spray-painting my car, slashing my tires, and so on."



As he recites a litany of facts relating to the



destruction of his car, it is easy to forgive Tod Schneider his most apparent human weakness, which is his desire to be seen as a decent, well meaning liberal person. He doesn't carry a gun, he says, and is puzzled that someone might target him as a representative of repressive authority. After arriving in Eugene wide-eyed and broke as a nineteen-year-old hippie in 1971, he went to the University of Oregon, and then spent the next ten years working for the White Bird free clinic and other local social-service agencies, caring for burnouts, acid casualties, and other needy members of the community. In 1986, after joining the Police Department, he cut his hair short and bought a modest wood-frame house in Whiteaker, where he lives with his wife and children. The books above his desk, including a social history of the civil rights movement and *Common Ground* by J. Anthony Lukas, suggest the personal library of a middle-aged sociologist at the nearby U of O.

Like everyone else in Eugene, Tod Schneider has his own account of where the anarchists came from, an account that includes the radicalization of local environmental activists after a successful two-year-long occupation of a tract of forest land at Warner Creek; the violent response of local police to a 1997 demonstration against Symantec, a high-tech company that had moved into Eugene and cut down forty trees; the influence of a local anarchist writer named John Zerzan; the radical fervor of a group of ten or fifteen teenage anarchists at South Eugene High School; the encouragement provided older activists by the anarchist response to the IMF protests in Seattle, Washington, and Washington, D.C.; and the long-standing tradition of anarchist activism in the United States, which has flourished in Portland, Oregon, and elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest. To Tod Schneider, the local anarchists, street kids, and punks

The larger changes that Schneider has seen in Eugene over the last thirty years, he says, are part of the broader social picture that you see everywhere else. There are more people with more money eating at better restaurants and driving more expensive cars. At the same time, according to the front page of this morning's paper, the income gap between the richest and poorest families in Oregon widened over the last decade by almost 50 percent. At night, the streets of downtown Eugene are home to a floating population of approximately 400 street kids, many of whom were abandoned by their parents. The kids sleep in shelters, under highways, in cars, in $30-a-night motel rooms on Sixth Street, in newspaper-recycling boxes out doors, and in the woods. Two years ago a local teenager named Kip Kinkel shot and killed his parents, and then opened fire on his classmates at school.

"The forces that used to be right there, the people sitting on their front stoops and watching the neighborhood," Schneider says, propping his worn brown Hush Puppy loafers up on a corner of his desk, "that kind of world is all but gone. You don't feel comfortable telling some kid you don't know, 'Hey, knock that off,' because you're afraid that you're going to get sued or accused of something. Kids are taught not to talk to strangers, which is one of the worst crime-prevention errors in the history of the country, since 90 percent of offenses against kids are committed by relatives, not strangers. Strangers are the guy running the corner grocery store or the neighbor across the street who maybe you could turn to and say, 'I need some help.'

"The more those things go away there's less of a sense of trust and safety in the community and more of a sense of isolation," he continues, gesturing out the window to the darkened storefront across the street. "Isolation is one of the things that makes people go crazy. That's why we punish prisoners by putting them in solitary confinement. And we do that in our culture by isolating people from each other."

Houses in Whiteaker are often drafty and poorly insulated, and the warmth of the old-fashioned steam radiators and electric heaters is rarely strong enough to make much of an impression on the weather. After only a few days of unending damp, bundled in Levi's jeans and a hooded sweatshirt, I become aware that the distinctive generational emotions of foot-dragging anger, thwarted desire, and suici-

ful disconnection familiar to fans of brand-name Pacific Northwestern rock bands like Nirvana and Pearl Jam in the early Nineties, as well as to partisans of Nirvana's more current and folkishly introverted cousins on the Olympia-based Kill Rock Stars label, have at least as much to do with the rain and fog and cold as they do with the decay of the American social fabric or the anomie-inducing properties of the Net. The weather is enough to make anyone miserable. The cold and the damp enter into your body, and after a while it is impossible to stay warm.

Randy and Kari's apartment, on the first floor of a wood-frame house in Whiteaker, is a warm and cozy oasis of silk-covered cushions on the floor and printed cloth tapestries hanging from the ceiling. With the silk cushions and the tapestries and the array of Christmas lights blinking from an assemblage of tree branches in the corner, it feels like a cross between an artist's loft and a Moroccan tent. Nearly everything in the apartment is handmade.

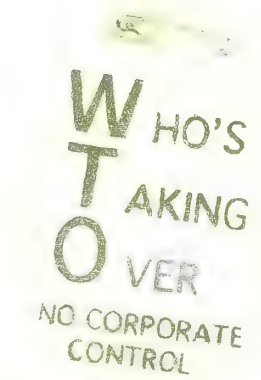
"The helicopters show you where the action is," Randy explains. A videographer who grew up in Eugene as the child of hippie parents and now goes by the name Randy Shadowalker, or Shade, he shot the footage we are watching on a handheld camera, as part of his ongoing attempt to capture the experience of the Whiteaker community in its own language, free of commercial sponsors and ads. He looks like a hip but scary children's book character with a mournful face and unwashed, shoulder-length hair. The hour-long films he makes are shown on Sunday nights at the Grower's Market under the title "Simmeren Stew." He is lying on the floor as images of smashed windows and policemen in riot gear fill the screen above his head. Kari is steaming vegetables in the kitchen. Next to the sink is a plastic container for vegetable matter to be used as compost for the nearby community garden.

"It was the ultimate paint-ball game," Kari says, entering the living room with a plate of steamed broccoli, as the camera pans across the storefronts belonging to Starbucks Coffee and Fidelity Investments. "No real bullets. The gas does get to you after a while."

Like most of Whiteaker's radical bohemians, she eats vegan food, works a part-time job, and wears secondhand clothes. A mural she painted decorates the Jawbreaker art gallery a block away.

Below a spray-painted anarchy sign on a wall is the message WE ARE WINNING. The camera pans to a shot of the front page of the *Seattle Times*, with the headline "Shoppers Barred in Retail Core," and everyone laughs. The camera glides to a boarded-up Urban Outfitters, then to a long, artistic zoom in shot of the McDonald's golden arches enveloped in a floating cloud of tear gas. The people in the room have seen this tape before. They are spellbound by the images on the screen, by scenes from a fairy-tale world in which good conquers evil and the edifice of American consumer culture comes crashing down. It is a scenario straight out of *Star Wars* in which the evil empire of Starbucks and McDonald's, with its bad food and soul-sucking corporate architecture, is conquered by the forces of sustainable living and tofu pâté. May the force be with you! Yet the mythopoetic sources of the dream to which the aspiring Lukes or Leias in Randy Shadowalker's living room adhere run deeper than the epic dreams of George Lucas circa 1977. A belief in the coming apocalypse is as American as apple pie once was, and the taste for Armageddon has been part of the basic operating code of the West since the birth of Christ.

So much for mythopoetics. What interests me more, at this moment, are the reasons why a community of mostly secular middle-class TV-literate individuals would subscribe to a world vision more commonly held by crypto-survivalist freaks who live off the grid in log cabins, hew wood and draw water, and engage in prayerful shoot-outs with the FBI. The mood is not really all that hard to describe. Beneath the belief in unspoiled nature and the rhetoric of total industrial collapse is a no less urgent desire to be part of something larger than oneself—the same desire that motivates consumers to drink Starbucks coffee and wear Nikes. The attempt to escape one's corporate-branded identity by identifying with hand-painted clay plates and torn sneakers is part of the logic of consumer society. Which is not to say there is anything wrong with the idea of crafting your own life, spending time with close friends, walking lightly on the earth, buying only what you need, and celebrating the secondhand and handmade. Only that the fantasy of escape from the market is itself the product of market forces, and anyone who thinks different is likely to get screwed.



If the logic of late-stage capitalism is enough to make anyone dizzy, the bathroom of Randy and Kari's apartment offers at least some



prospect. Above the wall is a scene of swimming dolphins whose peaceful, intelligent [illegible] attention to the toilet, whose [illegible] basin testifies to the importance of saving water. The mirror is decorated with dried [illegible] and a handmade relief that asks, "Why is it called Black Market?" and answers, "Because it's Beautiful." The ginger toothpaste on the sink is manufactured by Tom's of Maine. The dolphins look down their bottle-shaped noses from the wall. It is only a matter of time, they are thinking. Global warming is real. In a thousand years the polar ice caps will melt, the cities will be flooded, and the virgin forests of the Cascades will be buried underwater. Starbucks coffee, Nike sneakers, McDonald's wrappers, computers and television sets, and all the other detritus of human civilization will petrify at the bottom of a vast and all-encompassing ocean ruled by dolphins with brains two or three times the size of the vanished race of human beings. Fear will be banished forever. The dolphins will build a great and lasting civilization, a mighty oceanic reich where no one is ever bored or alone.

In front of the television set, Randy sips apple-ginger juice from a Mason jar. He is talking about his parents' divorce and about the recession of the late Seventies, when the national housing market crashed and the mills in Eugene shut down.

"I remember once it was a cheese factory," Randy says of Eugene's attempt to attract new industries. "Everyone was bummed out about the cheese factory not coming to town. After that it was a chocolate factory. I remember seeing people lined up around the block, waiting to fill out applications at Taco Bell."

Thanks to the breaks offered to Symantec, Hyundai, and other local high-tech employers, Eugene is now a magnet for highly paid workers from Silicon Valley who drive BMWs and Land Rovers through town and enjoy facials and massages at the Gerard's day spa down the street. As Randy and Kari see it, Eugene has become part of a rapacious consumer culture that destroys the environment, exalts material values, and pacifies the benighted population by filling their minds with corporate-sponsored sludge. Beneath the handmade aura of their lives you can feel a powerful unfelt sweetness, as if a world [illegible] that they didn't make, but that they feel every day [illegible] absence of.

talk about peace and love. In the vision of the world they have adopted, they will always be the losers, because they are virtuous but weak, and their opponents—the consumer-hungry legions of Starbucks, McDonald's, and Nike, plus the Eugene police force and the local yuppies—are ruthless and strong. It is not a world that I would want to inhabit. What makes it bearable for them, is that they know the truth, that they understand what it means to press up against the shatterproof glass of reality until you break on through to the other side.

"I love to use a lot of the TV stuff as a mirror reflecting back on itself," Randy says, as the riot policemen on-screen club a knot of peaceful demonstrators who have chained themselves to a post. "I want people to walk down the street and freak the fuck out. I want them to walk into McDonald's and look around and wonder, 'How do I get the fuck out of this system?'"

Life as a front-line activist requires a kind of personal migration, beyond the settled boundaries of work and school, beyond the reach of the thousand-fingered massage of brand names and logos, well-designed toasters and television ads. You change your name. You stop eating meat. You stop drinking milk. Everything you own fits comfortably in the pack that you carry from town to town and from apartment to apartment. The apartments you live in have no furniture. You know people by their first names, or their forest names, or their underground names. When you first meet someone, you might exchange names but not phone numbers. Most people in town wonder if they're under police surveillance. You might meet someone five or six times before you invite him over to your house.

Seekers, drifters, and train-hopping street kids often make their way to one of Whitaker's communal apartments, where they can meet like-minded people and find a bed for a night or a week before moving on. It is the kind of world you can build in when you are in your twenties before you have kids and no one is particularly inspired, a place where rents are cheap and people work part-time jobs as waiters or telemarketers, ride their bikes, and cook at home. The Ant Farm is home to Food Not Bombs. The Pleasure Palace is the local anarchist house. Environmental activists often wind up at the Ranch House, home to the leaders of Earth First! or at Bipi's House, a center for the tree-sitters at Fall Creek who have built a network of platforms 200 feet above the forest floor. Broadway House is home to a floating collection of radical activists, and Blair House is a magnet for punks.

Underground houses shelter activists affiliated with ALF and ELF and other radical animal liberation and environmentalist groups, responsible for raids on animal-research labs and incendiary attacks like the one that burned the Boise Cascade timberlands management center to the ground.

At Out of the Fog, a local vegan coffee shop, a bearded wanderer who calls himself Air takes careful sips from a glass of steamed soy milk as he describes his recent tree-sitting experience at Fall Creek. He spent eight or nine days in the forest and has spent the last month in town sleeping on a friend's porch. Before that he worked for a year on a farm in Maine, then traveled in a motor caravan across the country, promoting opposition to the WTO. He is thirty years old, polite and soft-spoken, and wears a black woolen watch cap pulled down low over his brow. "I'm someone who works for a positive transformation in society," he explains as three local environmental activists heatedly discuss the latest episode of *The X-Files* at the next table over. It takes a while for Air to feel comfortable enough to talk. He grew up in Chicago, he says, where he went to a private boarding school and then to the University of Illinois. His movements over the last ten years are a map to the confluence of urban radicalism and the environmental movement, taking him through Berkeley, Minneapolis, New York, Austin, San Francisco, and Philadelphia to the environmentalist blockades at Headwaters and Warner Creek. In 1998, at Grizzly Creek in northern California, he was sitting in the forest with another activist named Gypsy when an angry logger felled a tree in their direction. Gypsy died. "The highest path is to put down roots somewhere, grow your own food, and lead a connected life," he says. "At the same time, I seem to fit in really well with a traveling lifestyle."

Working your way into the radical activist network in Eugene takes patience and time. The community is private and suspicious, and operates on many levels, reaching out to new arrivals through a variety of formal and informal institutions that also function as a sifting process separating the committed activists from the floating population of transients, addicts, unstable personalities, and possible spies. The literature on local activities and causes available at local coffeehouses and vegan restaurants welcomes newcomers into an alternate universe of affiliations that celebrate the pleasures of commercial-free consumption. "You hear the most amazing stuff on RFC," explains a leaflet for Radio Free Cascadia, the local pirate radio station. "Paranoid rants, out-of-print jazz albums, talk shows on anarchy, drunken tales of bondage, news from Cuba, erotica read over techno beats, and [illegible] movie dialogue."

The Black Cat Monitor, the leading voice of anarchism in Eugene, serves up a peppery blend of anarchism, environmentalism, and animal rights mixed with the unwashed aroma of a room full of fifteen-year-old kids who are enjoying their very first experience of punk rock. One author predicts "the Nuclear family ... meltdown for imbecility," while others call the WTO protests "a carnival of reformist lies" and provide instructions for making "a Paraffin-Sawdust incendiary" that is "almost as effective as napalm against combustible targets, but it is slower in starting." A parable entitled "Ship of Fools" targets the errors of reformist liberalism. The author is Ted Kaczynski. The radical end of the environmental movement is well represented, too. "Not only will the American people be robbed when the Anti-Forest Service steals their trees and sells them to Jap-O Lumber of Eugene," an anonymous tree-sitter warns from Fall Creek, "but all the creatures who live here will have their homes stolen ... to please a handful of brass-eyed money-mongruls." An essay entitled "Beyond Civil Disobedience" by "Snap Dragon" puts the radical environmentalist case in more sober terms. "Most [Civil Disobedience] campaigns require enormous amounts of time and resources but achieve very little," the author writes. "Making these compromises would be justifiable if we were getting something significant out of it. But we don't." The sense that time is slipping away is plastered on the telephone poles and on the walls of the Blue Street Free Space. "On time? Are we? What if we weren't?" a poster asks. "Losing track of time is so common many humans carry a 'time keeping' device."



Once you are past the age where everything unmistakably matters, it is easy to lose track of time, most often with the more general goal of escaping from your life. There is the thrill of dropping in from the sky to unfamiliar

Photograph © Shaun Walker/Sipa Press



with the interpersonal dynamics of carnival

still emotionally connected position that al-

acters whose dreams and aspirations are

ed levels of anxiety and strain. When I start to

phone to friends in distant places. I listen to

Rose. Winona Ryder has a willful fragility that

and the fog outside. John Zerzan, Eugene's leading

Ashbury, working as a social worker and later

into humorous that links our modern mechanis-

to the more ancient arts of Kabuki or Nō.

Bare of the traditional ritual masks, their faces

act like powerful magnets, attracting millions

of stray emotional particles charged with envy,

hatred, boredom, and fear. The incessant bom-

bardment of such particles cannot help but

have a negative karmic effect.

Imagine dating a newscaster. Or imagine what it would be like to be David Cassidy, whose comments on the mutually emasculating aspects of celebrity, in the final issue of *Bop Is Dead*, are simply the flip side of the standard critique. Peeking out from under my blanket, *Bop Is Dead* is a kind of twenty-something samizadat publication, which has a lot in common with the anarchist literature I have been reading in Eugene. It was purchased this morning at Green Noise Records, where I was killing an hour with no particular object in mind.

"They owned my likeness and put it on everything," the former teen idol recalls, below a picture of his dreamy, wondering twenty-year-old self, "plastic guitars, pillow cases, trading cards, lunch boxes, dresses. My mom told me my aunt was riding the escalator at Macy's and as she got off there was a huge cut out of me with these dresses hanging there. David Cassidy dresses.

". . . [Q] Was there ever a point [when] you felt unworthy? . . .

"[A] No."

After a week of lead-gray skies and the chill and the damp, it becomes difficult to separate the readings on my own internal barometer from the influence of the weather. The weather is everywhere, inside and out, throwing a depressive blanket over the streets and erasing the divisions between inner states and

resident anarchist theorist, keeps his apartment immaculately clean, with a pile of correspondence stacked neatly on his desk and a television set turned to face the wall. He is a clear-eyed man in his fifties, with a gray beard and an intellectual stoop to his shoulders, who graduated from Stanford University in 1966 and then spent the rest of the Sixties in Haight-

driving a cab. He is the favorite teacher of Eugene's anarchist youth. "Everybody was happy,

ren't we happy, let's watch the Nelsons and ten to the canned laughter," he says, recalling his childhood in the suburbs of northern alifornia. "And I remember thinking as a kid, m being strangled here. I don't get it. I don't ee it. Goddamn, what a death trip this is.'"

What Zerzan wants is a total collapse of industrial society, which will bring about a return to a primitive state where men will be at one ith nature. "It's becoming unbearable," he ys, "the real emptiness of this society. I think 's been emptied out by technology — the erosion of the moral self, the erosion of personal esponsibility . . . You get to a place where all inds of horrors are possible. . . . You're just an bject of the micro-marketing stuff, and there's o real attempt to give anybody the truth bout anything, because, after all, what does it natter?" He is patient and well-spoken, referencing the works of Jacques Ellul, Herbert Marcuse, and Exene Cervenka, lead singer of he punk-rock band X. Still, there is something n the tilt of his head, in the Slavic cast of his eatures, and in the gentle despair in his voice hat makes me think of a candlelit room from a ovel by Turgenev or Dostoevsky. The words ll seem to run together, to the sound of the ain falling on the wet ground outside. "Now verything is so mediated, real experience is eing evacuated at a dizzying speed," he continues. "People wonder why there are forty million people on antidepressants. The kids are ust getting dosed up on this stuff, because Ritalin isn't enough, and the teenage suicide ate has tripled in the last decade."

There is something unbalanced in his argument, in his desire for radical industrial collapse, that is causing my attention to wander, rom the television set facing the wall to a nearby Exer-Cycle to a neat pile of correspondence on his desk. "I felt a real connection with him, in an almost mystical way," Zerzan ays of his most famous correspondent, Ted Kaczynski. In addition to writing to Kaczynski, he also visited the Unabomber several times in ail. "There were just a whole bunch of biographical parallels," he explains. "We were both kind of whiz kids in school, we both renounced the academic route, we had brothers who were social workers, our fathers both died of cancer . . ." He sees Kaczynski as an ideological ally and as a modern-day John Brown. "They ain't innocent," he says of Kaczynski's victims. "Which isn't to say that I'm totally at ease with blowing them into pieces. Part of me is. And part of me isn't."

On Sunday nights at 7:30, activists and new arrivals gather in the upstairs meeting room at the Grower's Market for "Simmeren Stew," Randy Shadowalker's weekly look into the community's collective unconscious.

Sitting in the dark on folding chairs, or sprawled out on the carpeted floor, a packed house of approximately seventy-five people whistle and cheer as shots of smashed windows and menacing policemen appear on the screen. Images of the communal triumph in Seattle morph with dreamlike random logic into a *Hard Copy* segment denouncing electroconvulsive treatment, footage of the Gulf War, an air freshener ad from the Seventies, buffoonish shots of Mayor Jim Torrey, and scenes from Nazi propaganda rallies cross-cut with ads for new cars. Yet beneath the more general mood of sitting paranoid and stoned in the blurish glare of a television set at four in the morning there is also a very serious message.

"The power of advertising," a talking head with a British accent explains, "is based on its monopoly of the cultural space within which we think about ourselves." He speaks in the serious yet offhand tone that signals the presence of a truth received by all right-thinking people with a sympathetic nod of the head, whether they believe in what has been said or not. "The cultural space within which we think about ourselves" is a hard thing to define. Then again, the truth of these sentences is a powerful adhesive, bonding author and listener together in a common apprehension of superiority to the ignorant consumers of cable television and Big Macs.

"Wow, my teeth feel really clean!" explains a chirpy blonde in a toothpaste ad. Everyone laughs. A dog wanders through the narrow aisles, making its way up to the front of the room to lie down at the foot of the screen.



Against the evils of television ads and consumer culture are handheld shots of everyday life in Eugene, of familiar people and places that advertise the pleasure of removing yourself from the economy of fat-filled muffins and hormone-saturated cow's milk and entering a world where the muffins are all-natural and the soybeans are harvested by hand. A waitress at Out of the Fog explains the principles behind "Buy Nothing Day," when the cafe offers food and beverages for free. She is followed by scary infrared shots of shoppers at the local mall and by a deodorant ad warning, "If he smells, it's over." Freeing your mind from the grip of deodorant commercials is a step on the road to true liberation from new car ads and Styrofoam containers, and the even more subtle oppressions inherent in late-stage capitalism. From this



[illegible] indifferent to television, viewing Disney's [illegible] from the point-and-click method that is a part of everyday life. Only "Mother" Canada is quite. "Prairie dogs are cooperative," explains tonight's feature, an hour-and-a-half-long film about black-tailed prairie dogs. "They give off different calls for different predators. They groom each other." The audience's appreciation for the rodents' [illegible] behavior is matched by their disdain for the human residents [illegible]

"See" [illegible] a rancher in a [illegible] prairie dogs in the sights [illegible]

"Bite 'em!"

[illegible]

Huddled out in front of the Grower's Market, a small knot of new arrivals are discussing their [illegible] the night. "We could go to the Ant Farm or the Broadway House," a boy in a denim jacket offers. No one in the group is over [illegible]. They have come to Eugene, they explain, to join the tree-sit at Fall Creek. The boy in the denim jacket came from Colorado. His name is Brian, and he heard about Eugene from [illegible]. He thinks that [illegible] to live.

Standing off to the side, staring out into the [illegible] a blond guy in a hooded patchwork corduroy [illegible] the back. Up to [illegible] Wiggy." He laughs at [illegible] he [illegible] "Actually, I'm not homeless—I have a place to live." He grew up in Massachusetts, he says, and [illegible] "I've been [illegible] the last two years." He [illegible] help doing the math. Eight times four is thirty-[illegible]

[illegible] of the night when he was living in [illegible] New York, and he decided to climb the Williamsburg Bridge. "I told them that I wanted to see trees. You have to climb trees if you want to see the trees. That's why I came here."

In the forest outside Eugene, activists live on sheets of four-by-eight plywood with caches of food, wood-powered rocket stoves, and emergency cell phones. Perched above the floor of an ancient, gnarled stretch of old-growth forest known as Fall Creek. They have been sitting in trees for the last two years under the banner of Red Cloud Thunder, the environmental organization directed by Deane Rimerman, which has moved beyond the letter-writing campaigns and civil-disobedience tactics of the mainstream environmental movement to the idea of a sacred community that will use any means necessary to defend endangered lands. "When I first showed up in town in '95," Rimerman explains, "there was a whole community of people organized around defending Warner Creek." At Warner Creek activists blockaded roads by chipping their hands to buried concrete blocks until a court finally issued an injunction against cutting the trees, pending an investigation of claims that the forest was a refuge for spotted owls, whose territories are protected by the Endangered Species Act. In response Senator Slade Gorton of Washington attached the so-called salvage rider to the 1995 Recisions Act releasing timber sales that were held up by the courts, "notwithstanding any provision of law."

It was then, Rimerman says, that environmentalists and anarchists began to come together. In March 1998, under the authority of the salvage rider and the Northwest Forest Plan, the Clinton Administration approved the sale of the Fall Creek tract to Zip-O Lumber of Eugene. The first tree-sitters were discovered on April 20, 1998. Rimerman's goal now is to save the forest and to build a community of younger activists who feel comfortable operating outside of mainstream environmental campaigns and, when necessary, outside of the law.

"The more basically kids who are searching to find something in their lives," Rimerman explains. "They are coming out of typical American families, which are broken families." Some are mentally imbalanced. Others are young addicts who come to the forest to get straight, or [illegible] and scream and start fights to get attention. "Most of the kids that come out here visit once and leave," he says. "They don't have the social skills. They are much more pissed off at the world." Fall Creek [illegible] sense of community, a place where they can work, cook, and live together a

fenders of pure and ancient forest lands.

"Trees and forest symbolize unconditional ve," Rimerman explains. "That's not some- me that many of these kids have left behind in en lives. You take them out of this hate filled ciety, and you give them a place where they n be free." You have to believe that trees ve a life of their own to see why the environ- ental movement is such a powerful magnet for e innermost dramas of a generation that grew talking to their television sets. As objects of e's own internal process, the trees stay pure d absolute forever. Trees represent freedom, the love of your parents in its most perfect d ideal form. Every tree is the same. They are ome, nature's own version of a new pair of eakers or a famous actress. You can become ne with the trees in a way that would be much ore difficult to accomplish with the poor and ppressed. What you are left with in the end is pure and unbounded field for projection. You an erase the boundaries that exist between yourself and the world, and vanish completely inside your own head.

In an anonymous apartment in Whiteaker, ith beige wall-to-wall carpeting in the living om, bare mattresses on the floor, and a copy *The MIT Guide to Lock Picking* in the bath- oom next to a bar of Residence Inn soap, a roup of activists are talking about the direc- ion of their lives. "Right now there are people ving in trees, because it's something they be- ieve in," explains a crew-cut young activist in red T-shirt and denim overalls who gives his ame as "Free." He is lumber, tidgety, and harismatic, in his late teens or early twenties. He speaks with a clarity of purpose that he car- ied with him from the suburbs of Los Angeles, here he grew up, to the forest at Fall Creek.

"I'm not fucking happy," he says when I ask im about his state of mind. "I'm not sitting in ucking trees in the cold because I'm happy. oing to jail doesn't make me happy. Going to ail is a bad experience. We're out there be- ause we know we're right."

Two years ago Free was the first activist to nter the forest at Fall Creek and climb a tree. I have a very close relationship with my par- nts," he says. "They're very supportive." His ather was a federal officer who retired to spend nore time with his children. While Free was itting in a tree at Fall Creek, his parents led a rite-in campaign that sent 15,000 e-mails to Bill Clinton and Al Gore asking them not to ut the forest. His relationship with his parents s close, he says, because he and they agree on many issues, and perhaps also because his elder brother killed himself at eighteen.

"I was the rebellious one," he says. "And I know that they treated me in certain ways to prevent me from ending up like my brother."

His embrace of anarchist philosophies, he says, began on the first day of his intro to sociology class at Long Beach City College, when the professor walked into the classroom, put his head down on his desk, and delivered a speech that has stuck in his mind ever since.

"The reason you are here," his professor explained, "is because we live in a society that can't find meaningful, constructive, engaging work for enough of its members. So we made up this thing called college to delay your entry into society for four or five years while training your minds to accept a system of discipline and control that benefits a very small percentage of the population. When you graduate, most of you will wind up working as waiters or dishwashers, or in other mindless, dead-end jobs. You will come home at night, get drunk, and watch television. Welcome to sociology."



The other activists in the room had similar moments of radical disconnection, when they realized that government was a form of oppression, or that politicians lie, or that their parents' lives were empty, or that the culture around them was too empty to support the true weight of a life. "We can live off dumpster garbage, and we do, and we still live better than 90 percent of the world's population," one activist says. They don't want to give their names because they were present in Seattle and are involved in other activities at which the authorities might look askance. Seattle was the culmination of months of careful planning and organization. "It went just like the instructions said it would go," one activist says.

"My mom shops," another activist offers. "She creates scenes at the stores. It's embarrassing. She likes to buy the latest technological gadgetry for the home."

"They all know the latest character in Pokémon, that stupid fucking game."

"They all know that the pink Teletubby is gay."

Kooky, an activist in a tall mohawk, red longjohns, and overalls, came to Eugene three years ago after following the Grateful Dead. His given name is Steven Hesline. "The society we're living in now is so fundamentally rotten," he says, "that it's become almost commonplace for kids to walk into school with guns and murder their



but I would open my mouth and out came the usual liberal bullshit party line."

At the same time, Kooky admits, the life of an [illegible] either. "People here are unwilling to acknowledge [illegible] and I'm not really sure the [illegible]

The [illegible] hard-haired hippie named Skeeter, who lives in a [illegible] of his life working to expand the Oregon state bottle bill, which promised consumers a [illegible]

"The Snapple bill," he says, reclining on the floor. "That's what broke me. The beverage industry slammed us with their stupid, misleading [illegible] hypocrisy that I couldn't recognize myself anymore. [illegible] good? Do I believe in gun control? In my mind I [illegible]

[illegible] to Oregon, looking for land," he explains. "We were saving money, putting our money into a [illegible] that was the scene." As a student at San Jose State, Skeeter belonged to an audiovisual collective that filmed protests, engaged in street theater, and demonstrated against the war in Vietnam. In 1971 the collective picked up en masse and moved to a three-story farmhouse in Eugene, where they worked the land and made their own tofu and mayonnaise. He later became a child-care worker and looked out for many local kids who are now his neighbors in Whiteaker. He sees their mood as similar to his own but filled with a lot more darkness and despair.

"I threw my rocks," he says. "I threw rocks at Nixon. And all these years later part of me is still bummed out that I did. I threw rocks through windows in San Francisco," he continues, "and there were secretaries behind those windows who had nothing to do with the corporate power of the Vietnam War. Someone might have gone blind."

No matter how many times I nod, as I gently try to change the subject, Skeeter stays focused on the rocks, a thirty-year-old memory that would appear to be symbolic of some deeper trauma or disturbance that he wants to set right. A young anarchist leader named Marshall Kirkpatrick, a bearded kid in his early twenties, listens attentively from a seat on the [illegible] Skeeter flutters his fingers and fixes Marshall with a drawn-out hippie stare. He takes another drag on his hand-rolled cigarette, then turns to me and launches into a story about watching a group [illegible] stomp a man into the sidewalk one evening in Berkeley on the suspicion that he might be a cop.

"So there's a bunch of freaks beating on this guy, and I'm saying, 'Are we going to lynch the guy? Are we going to kill him?' It scared me, [illegible] people I laugh

ave hurt. As I've gotten older, I worry about people taking things into their own hands."

The world outside of Whiteaker is an eam of false desires, summoned up by corpor like technologies and by the destructive eed of big corporations. Under the circumances, the best thing to do is to ride your bicycle to work, scale back your desires, and ead a modest life in which no one gets hurt. Thou shalt not eat meat. Thou shalt not buy ew clothes. Thou shalt not dominate or oppress. The commandments prevailing here ave less in common with anarchism than ney do with the teachings of Jesus Christ, or ith the absolutist psychology of children hose parents split up or sold out or otherwise succumbed to the instability inherent in modrn marriage.

Eric and Whitney are in their early twenties nd live together in a ground-floor Whiteaker partment, where they spend a lot of their ime. They work at the tofu factory in town. Whitney draws and plays the piano. Eric watches television and reads. One of the major questions they face is how to reconcile their mphasis on personal freedom with the possibility that someone else might get hurt.

"Eric's a lot more free with where he places things," Whitney says, in her precise way of speaking. "My space is my space, and I like it a certain way."

"Whitney lets stuff build up inside her," Eric says, rubbing the reddish stubble on his chin. "She'll get mad about a lot of things and say nothing."

Eric's parents divorced when he was four years old. He left home at fifteen. "I remember distinctly sitting there in freshman math class and thinking, 'My parents don't have any money, I'm not going to college anyway,'" he says over the low thrum of the stereo. He moved into a rooming house, where his neighbors included a guy who wrote for the *Earth First! Journal*, a crazy guy who wanders the streets, and a recent graduate of the University of Oregon with a bachelor's degree in science who worked as the day manager of a Carl's Jr. franchise and was happy to have the job. The genleness in Eric's voice is the type that conceals some deeper anger. "Today I spent an hour watching a Q and A with reporters who covered Governor George W. Bush in Texas," Eric says. "They were all talking about George W. Bush. The big question was whether George W. Bush has the gravitas to be president."

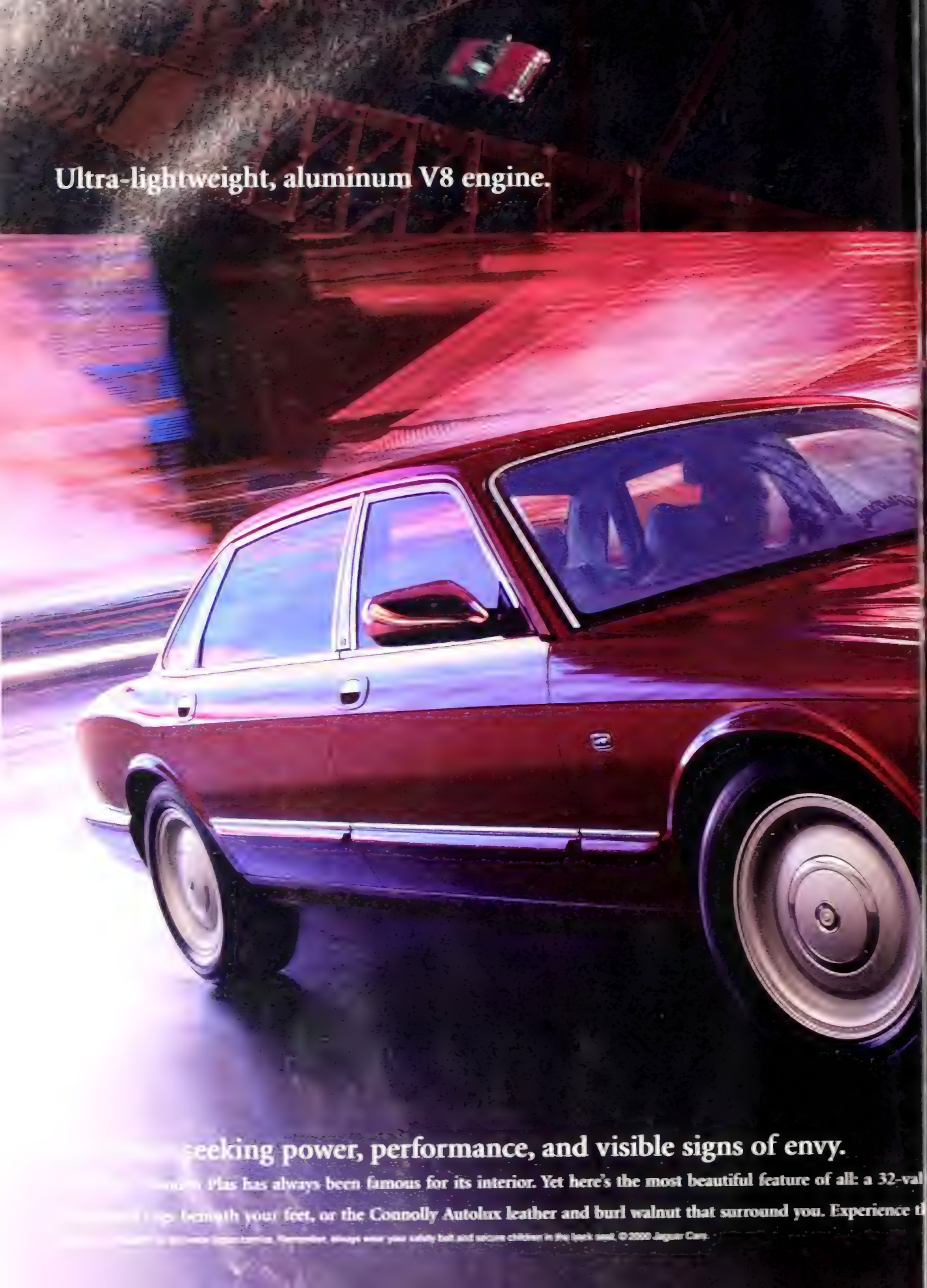
What seems most obvious about Eric and Whitney is that they are bound to each other by a shared love and by a shared anger. "My mom's one of the true Silicon Valley, found-Whitney says of her childhood in Cupertino, California. Her father runs a high-tech firm. "He makes a lot of money, but that wasn't what he wanted to do," he says. Their puritanical renunciation of unsavory appetites and impulses is matched by an emphasis on personal responsibility, which they contrast favorably with the attitudes of their parents. "They've been able to be okay with society," she explains. "They are happy with that and with the cost of what they bought, and I truly admire that in a way, that they have the necessary level of ignorance to make that work."



The life that Eric and Whitney make together, they believe, will be free of hypocrisy and compromise. They will be honest and straightforward with each other. They will use their poverty, imagination, and strength of will to keep their unruly desires in check. They will stay pure in a compromised world of superflammable materials made with slave labor in Third World countries, where half the people on the planet live on income of less than two dollars a day.

"I make fifteen thousand dollars a year before taxes," Eric says. "I try to spend my money in the neighborhood. I try not to buy new stuff. Which accomplishes nothing, sadly. I ride my bike to work." He leans back on the couch, taps the end of his hand-rolled cigarette, then talks some more. After a while, the simple, declarative sentences in which he sums up his life take on the solemn aspect of a hymn to the saving grace of limited desire. A palpable sense of release accompanies his words. By limiting his own desires, he has found a way to rebel and strike back without actually hurting anyone else.

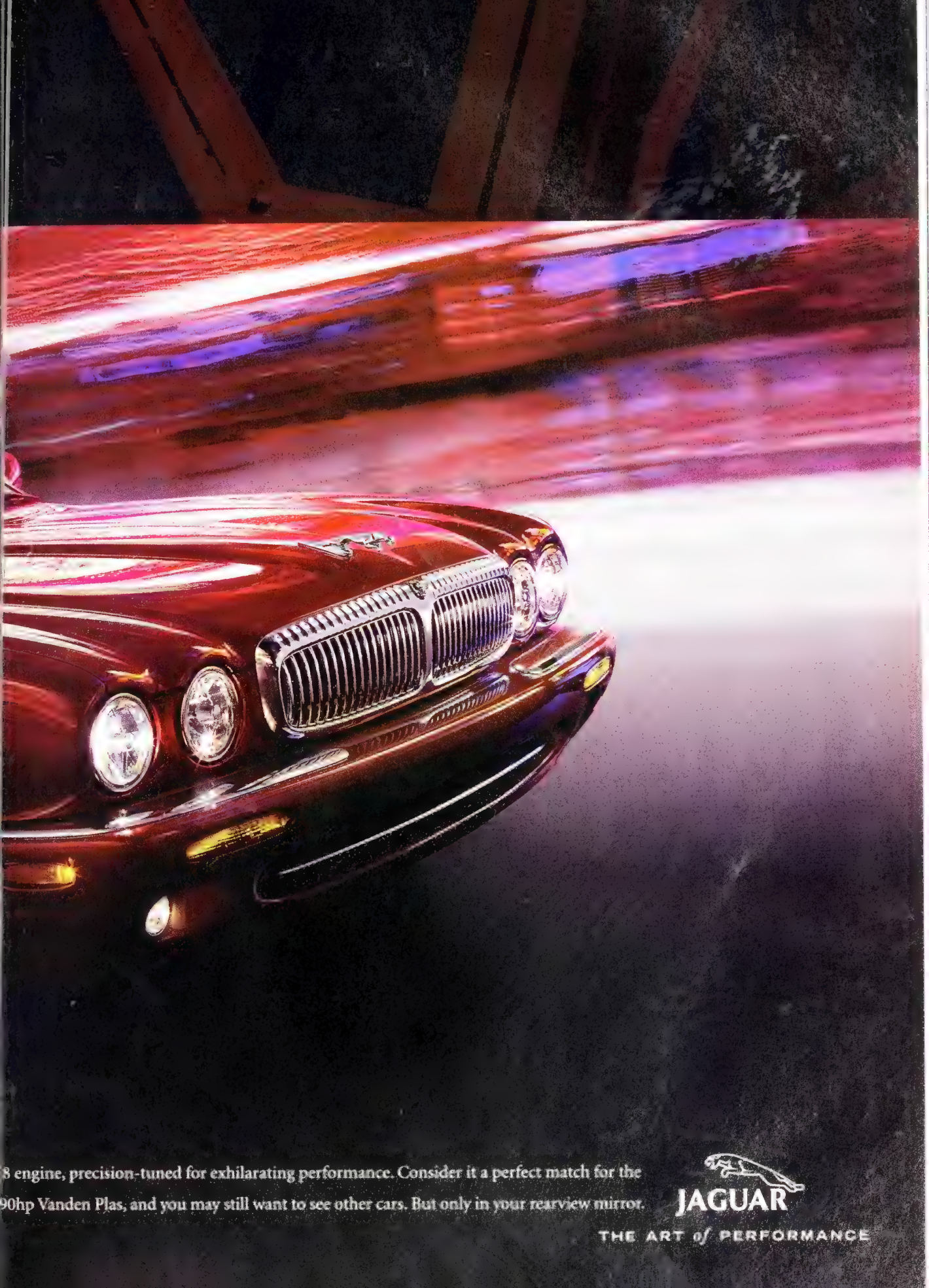
"I work in my little job," he says. "Spend my time with little people. Try to be a light on the earth as I can. Ameliorate other people's pain as I can." If there is something Christlike in this approach, there is also something Buddhist in it. What I want to tell Eric is that everything will work out okay, and that boredom, fear, and crushing disappointment are simply part of everyone's life. That it is better to live in the world than to withdraw from it. That to shut yourself down and live in a cave. What stops me from saying any of this stuff is the knowledge that in an hour or two at three thirty in the morning, I will return to the Hilton, turn the heat up too high, and fall asleep with the television on. ■



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JAGUAR
THE ART of PERFORMANCE

LET THE

Amid acres of toxic waste, Sydne

Australia won its 1993 bid to host the 2000 Olympics by promising to make them the greenest ever, and if you're going to Sydney this September, expect to hear paeans to Mother Nature performed more frequently than the Olympic Hymn. Promoters have even given the environment its own mascot, a Pepto Bismol–colored platypus named Syd. "If Syd sees anybody littering the land or polluting the water," quoth the official Web site, "he won't hesitate to thump his tail and let them know what he thinks." Rest assured Syd won't find any occasion for tail-thumping at Sydney's new $1.3 billion Olympic Park, the official map of which is shown here, organizers have greened every inch of this former toxic waste dump's 1,900 acres using the most cost-effective cleanup method available: public relations.



This "village," built to house athletes and officials, is little more than a $360 million Potemkin trailer park. After the International Olympic Committee declared itself an official sponsor of the environment in 1992, organizers seized upon a Greenpeace proposal to make the Olympic Village "a model of environmental protection," only to abandon it once the bid was won in favor of a more "bankable" design drafted by a consortium of Sydney's largest developers. When the Games end, half the village will be removed and the rest expanded into a new suburb called Newington. A decade ago, developers would have had to pay people to live in houses built on top of this wasteland. Thanks to the Green Games, homes in Newington now go for $300,000 each.

Whoops. Olympic mapmakers forgot to include the Lidcombe Waste Treatment Plant located here. Every year Lidcombe takes in thousands of tons of industrial waste and belches out fumes laced with carcinogens. Outside experts recommended moving the plant away from residential areas and sports facilities, but those hired by Lidcombe worried only that its malodorous exhaust would not be "aesthetically acceptable" to visitors. "[A]ppearance," they noted, "will be particularly important during the Games because there will be an enormous amount of public and media attention." Solution: landscaping to hide the plant from view.

Only promoters call Homebush Bay "the new heart of Sydney." Others call it "the dioxin capital of the world." For years organizers insisted that there were "no established records of dioxin disposal" here, even though the official overseeing the Olympic cleanup had himself once mapped dioxin-contaminated areas at Homebush and recommended that they "not be used for any [future] development." When environmentalists obtained his maps and other "established records" in 1997, organizers "unreservedly" apologized. Tests of waste dug up at Newington revealed dioxin levels 1,540 times what the U.S. EPA deems safe.

[illegible]N BEGIN!

[illegible]lympic green, *by Sharon Beder*

The name Kronos Hill was meant to lend, one presumes, a pseudo whiff of the eternal to the pretty much hummock of pestilential sludge, known previously as "Brad Haw" Mountain in honour of the waste company that created it. Here, hidden beneath three feet of topsoil and a few eucalyptus trees, lies a sixty-foot deep landfill so contaminated with heavy metals, asbestos, lead, hydrocarbons, pesticides, and dioxins that before it was capped in 1995 workers were required to wear respirators and plastic suits just to get within thirty feet of it. Far more expedient and inexpensive than waste treatment methods (which can break down certain toxic substances) or sealed "land vault" tills (which are designed to keep waste contained), "leaky" tills like Kronos "remediate" toxins as well as the local habitation of landowners — by letting them slowly leach away. Drains collect some of the poisonous runoff. The rest seeps into the groundwater.



Platypuses like Syd are river-dwelling creatures, but you won't find any swimming out there in Haslam's Creek. Three years ago, barrels of dioxin were found buried in the creek's bank, just yards from the Olympic Village. Homebush Bay, into which the creek flows, is one of the most polluted waterways in the world. A 1992 government investigation of the bay was kept confidential; a leaked memo revealed, for fear "that any action on the matter may jeopardise the Olympic bid." Only in 1997, after Greenpeace excavated 69 drums of dioxin at an abandoned Union Carbide factory next from the Olympic Park, did officials promise $17 million to dredge 35,000 tons of dioxin contaminated sediment from the bay's floor — recently delayed by reports it's too little and too late. The dredging has yet to begin.

— I see we're all united here, here, here, here, and there.

Pick up a copy of this map and other complimentary forms of disinformation at the Homebush Bay Visitors Centre. Handsomely illustrated brochures and helpful information officers will describe the environmental practices that freeclean up the mess at the "world's best Olympic Park," but they won't tell you about the elevated levels of contaminants in the groundwater. They'll brag about the several hundred trees that were planted with none of the fanfare that attends the removal of a few million tons of buried leaky fills. They'll tell you that Homebush Bay has been made safe but neglect to mention that in nearby newly developed Newington, cancer rates are 15 percent higher and those of respiratory disease 25 percent higher than in the rest of Sydney. They'll tell you that eco-celebrity Olivia Newton-John was enlisted to endorse the Games' theme that organizers encouraged the bid cities to use. The "world's best" practices were not those of the world's best EPP practitioners — Sydney's organizers will be awarded medals and trophies for competitive Olympic events at all [illegible] meters.

Sharon Beder, author of Global Spin: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism, *is a professor at the University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia.*

LICENSED TO KILL

Shadowing our government's favorite arms dealer

By Ken Silverstein

A

treated Glatt to be the kind of man who spends money to buy privacy.

In that they are correct. But perhaps it would surprise local residents to learn that their reclusive neighbor is one of the most important and enigmatic arms dealers of all time. For more than a quarter century, Glatt has had a hand in some of the most sensational U.S. covert operations. He secretly funneled weapons to a number of American-backed guerrilla forces and client regimes during the Cold War, and was the leading supplier for the Foreign Materiel Acquisition Program (FMA), a still-active "black" U.S. military operation that obtained huge amounts of weaponry from the former Soviet bloc and other "enemy" states. Yet he and his government sponsors have so successfully hidden his activities that Glatt is barely known outside of intelligence circles.

I first came across Glatt when the National Security News Service told me of an unreported 1995 lawsuit between Glatt and a former Pentagon official named Charles Petty. The lawsuit, filed by Glatt at the Fairfax County Courthouse in Virginia and settled on terms sealed from the public, stemmed from a botched effort to sell Honeywell-made mortars to the U.S. Army. During the discovery process, Petty's lawyer asked Glatt to reveal his connections to dozens of people. In addition to many retired and active-duty military officers, these ranged from the notorious Oliver North and Ed Wilson, the for-

ner CIA agent now serving a fifty
-year jail term for selling explo
ves to Muammar Qaddafi and then
tempting to kill Lawrence Barcella,
he U.S. attorney who prosecuted
m—to the obscure—"Lottur Jo
annesson the 'Icelander'" and "One
'ft Martin in Miami," both of whom
later discovered are arms dealers.
Glatt v. Petty was settled before Glatt
esponded to the motion for discov
ry, but the list of names provided a
useful guide for investigating his ca
eer. I tracked down most of the
people named, and the majority were
villing to talk to me, as were many
h the U.S. intelligence community,
hough often they asked to remain
nonymous.[1]

Glatt had never before given an
on-the-record interview, but over
the twenty months I investigated
him we did have several friendly
phone conversations and correspon
dences, though he skirted most of
my questions. Not only was Glatt's
cooperation limited but his acquain
ances often provided confusing and
contradictory information. A num
ber of people insisted that Glatt is
Austrian, not German. Some de
nounced Glatt as a Nazi, while oth
ers said with equal certainty that he
is secretly Jewish. From his current
home at the maximum-security Al
denwood Federal Penitentiary in

Pennsylvania, Ed Wolfson sent a cryptic e-mail: "Yes, I knew Werner. But no one knew Werner well. He's a smooth character." Another source claimed that Ernst Werner Glatt is not a real person but merely an alias for a U.S. intelligence agent.

What I discovered about Glatt is nonetheless a remarkable and revealing story. His business holdings



include factories, farms, and real estate spread across Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. In addition to the Black Eagle, he owns three Swiss chalets, an apartment in

[1] That I encountered such secrecy is hardly surprising. Arms dealers operate within a maze of private companies, aliases, and secret bank accounts. Charles Kerr, assistant counsel for the Senate during the Iran-Contra affair, told me that one weapons broker he interviewed confessed to having operated in a hall of mirrors for so long that he himself didn't know the difference between fact and fiction. Anonymous Glatt source [illegible] my one and only face-to-face bumped up against its outer limits. Former arms dealer Yaacov Nimrodi called me unsolicited; he was "curious" about Frank Michael Kohn, an American who brokered deals for the CIA during the 1980s, the first thing he said was, "I've been expecting you to call." [illegible] talk with you." Because Glatt's activities on behalf of the United States remain classified, even friendly sources revealed only a fraction of what they knew. And not everyone was friendly. One person refused to help because, he said, there were people within the national security establishment who would prefer that I not write the story. The CIA would neither confirm nor deny its relationship with Glatt but said that if there were an association, the agency wasn't prepared to discuss it.

[illegible] Glatt [illegible] by not reciprocated. Laurence Barcella, who ironically became Glatt's attorney after serving [illegible] Wilson behind bars, says that Glatt provided [illegible]

[illegible] Glatt's lawsuit against Graham.

Combining military-style buzz cut, tailor-made suits, and dueling



shaft's motto: "Give arms to all men who offer an honest price for them, without respect of persons or principles.") Zaharoff pioneered the use of credit, thereby paving the way for arms races among cash-strapped nations, and was especially adept at fueling military insecurity. His most

the Swedish company Nordenfelt he sold a submarine to Greece, a country he claimed when it suited him, explaining to a Greek official that he was "first a Greek, a patriot like yourself," and only second a salesman. Whereupon Zaharoff immediately went to the Turks, the Greeks' most hated enemy, and so terrified them with tales of the sinister new Greek submarine that they bought two of their own.

The activities of Zaharoff and other arms salesmen outraged the public, and by 1934 the call "to take the profit out of war" led the U.S. Senate to convene a special committee, which concluded that dealers "produce fear, hostility, and greater munitions orders on the part of neighboring countries, culminating in economic strain and collapse or war." But the subsequent reforms (henceforth all arms makers had to seek an export license from the State Department) hardly put an end to weapons manufacturing, which was an ever more important component of modern economies. As George Thayer wrote in his 1969 book, *The War Business*, "Instead of operating at 10 to 20 per cent of capacity . . . the free-world's arms industries have been operating since the late 1940s at 80 to 90 per cent of capacity. With governments ensuring high production levels and buying nearly the entire output, arms industries have had no need of Zaharoff-type salesmen who roam the world in search of sales."

Far from restraining the arms trade, government oversight merely institutionalized it. The State Department won't release its list but says that "tens of thousands" of companies and individuals are registered to sell weapons abroad. As Thayer wrote, the officials who supervise the trade "control budgets that would stagger the imagination of a Zaharoff, and they operate in

re enterprises that are so large, so gantuic, so powerful that effectively ey are beyond the control of elected presentatives. . . ."

The bulk of the global weapons siness is composed of tanks, anes, ships, and other big-ticket ms sold by and to governments. n 1998 the U.S. government sold billion worth of weapons—roughone third of the $23 billion world arket—and delivered another $10 llion that had been ordered in preous years.) But private arms dealers ill come in handy, especially when overnments wish to ship matériel fscreetly to controversial clients: uerrilla armies, regimes facing interational arms embargoes, and states hat are notorious human-rights busers. In this regard, nothing has hanged since 1934, when H. C. Enelbrecht and F. C. Hanighen wrote n their famous book, *Merchants of Death: A Study of the International rm ments Industry*. "The internaonal sale of arms . . . has far deeper ots than the 'conscienceless greed' f the arms makers. If all private rms makers decided to discontinue heir international traffic tomorrow, world-wide protest of *governments* ould not permit them to do it."

A 1997 article in *Jane's Intelligence eview* estimates that such black-maret sales come to about $2 billion in an years and up to five times hat much in good ones. Private ealers such as Glatt primarily upply rifles, machine guns, mors, grenade launchers, antitank ockets, and other matériel used n small-scale wars. And by armng combatants in border skirmishes and civil and proxy wars, hey play a far more significant role in eopolitical affairs than is reflected by his relatively small percentage of the lobal arms trade. To keep such sales ut of the public eye, brokers break he paper trail by setting up shell ompanies and offshore bank acounts, securing needed documents uch as end-user certificates—which erve as a pledge by purchasers not to eexport military matériel to third arties, but which, for the right price, ome governments are willing to issue egardless of the true destination of he arms—and handling the delicate task of paying off government officials and customs agents. Most important, middlemen provide governments with "plausible deniability" if a deal is exposed or otherwise bungled. "That old opening to *Mission: Impossible* is true," says one arms dealer. "The secretary really will disavow any knowledge of you if things go wrong."

Buyers, especially pariah regimes, also employ brokers. Identifying a source of merchandise, shopping for a good price, and arranging shipping and financing can be complicated, especially if the parties involved prefer to operate in the shadows. "Why do buyers use brokers?" asked Val Forgett, as we sat in the modest offices of his company, Navy Arms of Ridgefield, New Jersey. "For the same reason you use one when you're looking to buy a house."

Forgett decided to become a weapons trader when, as a child, he read about Zaharoff's exploits; during our interview, he pulled his 1948 high school yearbook from a bookshelf and pointed to the words below his graduation photo: "Will design and export arms." Today, Forgett sells mainly to collectors, but he has dealt with controversial regimes, such as Augusto Pinochet's, that were supposedly under international arms embargoes. "Ninety percent of the things that are said about the 'black market' in arms are the figment of writers' and politicians' imagination," Forgett says. "There are no secrets in this world. Everybody knows what you're doing. If weapons are being 'smuggled,' some government agency is behind it." For example, despite a worldwide embargo, in 1993 $2 billion worth of arms flowed to Balkan war combatants: Germany helped arm Croatia, Russian entrepreneurs supplied Serbia, and Iran, with help from the United States, funneled weapons to Bosnia. I asked Forgett if there is a regime he would [illegible]. "There are many, but I can't think of one [illegible]," he replied. "Even the government of the biggest arms dealer in the world, and if they issue me a license I'll sell."

[illegible]

There are modern arms dealers who have made more money than Glatt, among them Adnan Khashoggi, who for many years represented Lockheed and other U.S. companies that sold weapons to Saudi Arabia, and Sarkis Soghanalian, who began by arming Christian militias in Lebanon at the request of the CIA and was the leading supplier of Saddam Hussein during the 1980's. But these men largely made their money on registered transactions that went through official channels. Glatt, to the best of my knowledge, never engaged in an aboveboard deal. When, as was frequently the case, he arranged for a shipment at the behest of the U.S. government, it always involved a phony paper trail to obscure the true buyer and seller of the weapons. Glatt was a tool that the U.S. government used when it didn't want the public to know what it was doing.

If the one page of information released by Army Intelligence is to be believed, Glatt was born on April 13, 1928, and raised near the small German town of Lörrach, on the edge of the Black Forest. The forest was the setting for many of the traditional German fairy tales that Glatt read voraciously as a child. And perhaps for that reason he identified with an important figure in those legends, Wieland, a magical smith who could fashion elaborate armor, shields, swords, and even metal wings he once used to escape an evil king. A hero is a conqueror, Glatt has told acquaintances, but Wieland is the real professional. His family grew prosperous, Glatt says, in textiles, tires, and real

ARMS DEALERS LIKE GLATT ARE TOOLS THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT USES WHEN IT DOESN'T WANT THE PUBLIC TO KNOW WHAT IT'S DOING

Orientating with Nazi indoctrination, Glatt's virulent anti-Communism was later reinforced by his interaction with the American military and his obsessive love of money. But his acquaintances differ over whether he shows any residual traces of anti-Semitism. The vast majority of people who know him say he doesn't, pointing out that in 1968 he married Vera Gmelin, the daughter of an aristocratic Jewish family that fled Austria when the Nazis annexed it. (Although she converted to Glatt's Calvinist faith, he was detained during a trip to Saudi Arabia when a German competitor informed security forces that Glatt was married to a Jew. Glatt was freed a day later on the orders of his Saudi contact, who was a relative of King Faisal's.) Over the years, Glatt has made significant investments and many friendships in Israel. "He was a *Deutschland über alles* type of guy and would never apologize for what the Germans did," says a retired American general. "But if you asked him if it was a good idea to weed out the Jews, I presume he'd say no." On the other hand, I spoke to a few people who had an experience similar to that of gunrunner John Miley, who recounts meeting Glatt for the first time. "He starts off on this Nazi routine, that the one thing he'd like to see before he dies is the resurrection of the Third Reich," Miley says. "He didn't care about a nuclear exchange between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, because it would create a power void that Germany would fill. Maybe he was just trying to shock me. But it was offensive."

"GLATT LIKED THE IDEA OF BRIBING COMMUNIST OFFICIALS TO SELL US COMMUNIST WEAPONS TO KILL COMMUNISTS," SAID GENERAL JOHN SINGLAUB

That's not to say that this posturing is too straight out of central casting to be entirely serious. Certainly Glatt likes getting under people's skin, and his sense of humor common in these circles. And [illegible] would enjoy playing with his own stereotype, perhaps because it amuses him and perhaps because, in his business, such a stereotype might sometimes work to your advantage.

GUNRUNNING EMPIRE

In any case, postwar Germany was not the best place for a man with Glatt's ambition to make his mark, and he soon "decided that he needed to study languages if I wanted to succeed in international business." By 1959 he was a student at the University of Geneva, where he met Sam Cummings, the most famous arms dealer of the time. After serving as a gun instructor for the U.S. Army during World War II, Cummings went to work for the CIA. He was sent to Europe with a cover story of purchasing weapons on behalf of a Hollywood studio, but his real task was to buy up surplus wartime stocks which the CIA funneled to organizations and governments friendly to American interests. In 1953, Cummings launched his own company, Interarms, which supplied weapons for the 1954 CIA-led coup in Guatemala and for pro-U.S. dictators such as Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua and Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic.

Impressed with Glatt's linguistic skills, Cummings asked Glatt to try to buy weapons in Budapest, which was difficult for Americans to enter. When Glatt was successful, Cummings sent him on other trips to the Eastern bloc, and this hobby soon became a full-time job. Glatt rose quickly within company ranks, eventually becoming a vice president. The two men became so close that Glatt served as Cummings's wedding as his best man. (Or so says Glatt. Cummings has claimed it was the other way around—just one of the ways the two would play out elaborate dominance issues.)

Glatt left Cummings's employ in the early 1970s, but the two men continued to collaborate until later in the decade, when Cummings accused Glatt of cheating him out of a major deal. For his part, Glatt told me that he [illegible] with Cummings when [illegible]

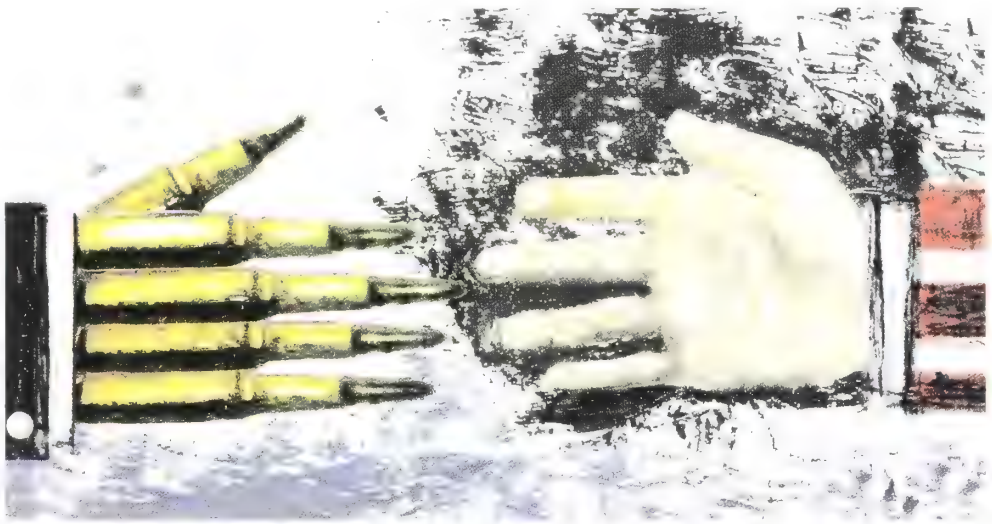
utter became persona non grata at he Pentagon because of what Glatt alled "his love for stupid publicity, which] caused all sorts of difficulties ith the competent authorities in the rade and affected my income." Glatt old me that another reason for Cummings's diminished stature was hat in the 1970s he renounced his .S. citizenship for tax purposes. Given that the CIA has worked with Nazi war criminals and Guatemalan death squad members, I found it hard o believe that this act could get one blacklisted, until several intelligence sources corroborated that it did.

Whatever the circumstances, the falling-out coincided with Cummings's eclipse n the arms world. From the mid-1970s until his death in 1997, Cummings sold mostly o collectors, though he would brag to journalists that he still kept enough weapons on hand o equip forty army divisions. n the end, "Cummings was he P. T. Barnum of the gun business," says Colonel Ryan. "He had a warehouse full of junk—old, antiquated arms—and there were probably enough rifles to outfit a division. But there's no magic in having a warehouse. I could buy rifles in lots of 1,000 today without blinking an eye. All he did was every once in a while dump a few thousand rifles into some African countries that nobody gave a flying fuck about."

After his break with Cummings, Glatt became obsessed with outdoing his former employer. Like Cummings, Glatt got into the business of refurbishing used weapons and for a time was a co-owner of a company called Collector's Armoury, in suburban Virginia. Cummings had a huge farm in Middleburg, so Glatt bought the Black Eagle. "He often said he wanted above all else to be bigger in the arms business than any one else, particularly Sam Cummings, so that one day the West German government would call him to Bonn and offer him the position of defense minister," says a former business partner. The call from Bonn never came, but by the late 1970s Glatt was known as one of the top international arms dealers.

It was a marvelous time to be in the arms business. After selling for years almost exclusively to close allies, the United States had begun offering up sophisticated arms to Third World countries as a means of winning support in the Cold War. Buyers were also plentiful. In 1973, OPEC raised oil prices by 70 percent, and a number of once poor countries were awash in "petrodollars," great quantities of which were recycled back to Western countries via arms purchases. The American government's sales soared from less than $5 billion in 1970 to $27 billion in 1982 (figures adjusted for inflation).

A proliferation of U.S. covert operations in support of anti-Soviet guerrilla groups brought about a simultaneous boom in the black market. Private weapons brokers were in great demand, especially after CIA Director Stansfield Turner began dismissing some 800 agents in mid-1977. The firings—which came in response to revelations about the agency's involvement in the Chilean coup that brought Pinochet to power and attempt to assassinate Fidel Castro, and other embarrassments—left the CIA badly undermanned. Glatt, the international arms market. "Turner fired the old boys, and they were the money behind," says Vietnam veteran John Miley, who in 1979 became a junior partner to Lotfur Johannesson ("The Icelander" from Perry's list) after having served as an assistant army attaché to the American Embassy in London. "The new boys couldn't find their names in a telephone book."



Miley now lives in suburban Tampa, and we spent the better part of two days going through old files in his small study, where a solitary air purifier was hopelessly overwhelmed by the cigarettes Miley ferociously consumed. Once Miley armed revolutions; today he publishes a community newsletter and, like virtually every former gunrunner I met, dreams of writing his memoirs. He told me how Glatt would sometimes team up with Johannesson, a former commercial pilot and Red Cross flyer who ran a Panamanian-registered shell company called Techaid International out of an eighth-floor office at London's Roebuck House. One of Techaid's most lucrative operations came in 1980, when Miley and Johannesson supplied the CIA with rifles and other weapons for anti-Communist guerrillas in Afghanistan. The CIA could, of course, acquire all the American-made

It was there that in 1997 Cummings's daughter Susan killed their Argentinean pilot boyfriend Roberto Vattuone with a Weather Pl Prosecutors claimed that she shot him from behind as he sat at a restaurant, but her lawyer (best known for defending Lorena Bobbitt) persuaded the jury that it was self-defense. Convicted of voluntary manslaughter, Cummings received sixty days in jail and a $2,500 fine.

equipment it desired, but for covert operations the agency preferred Soviet materiel. Not only was it cheap and of high quality, but it rarely obscured American fingerprints. Carrying Russian equipment also allowed U.S. backers of rebel forces to arm themselves on the battlefield with weapons captured from Soviet-supplied opponents. "You're not sending Fedex," a U.S. Special Forces veteran patiently explained. "Shipping routes are often difficult, and you might not be able to send in American weapons whenever you want."

One of the perverse secrets of the Cold War was that, if properly greased, Eastern bloc officials were more than willing to sell Russian equipment to arms dealers working with the West. Russia's allies were so desperate for hard currency that such sales were frequently approved at the highest levels of government, even when it was obvious that the matériel would end up in the hands of anti-Communist armies. No one was better at quietly tapping into Soviet bloc armories than Glatt, who had worked extensively in Eastern Europe during his years with Cummings. And as a European, Glatt was exempt from the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, which prohibits Americans from bribing foreign officials. "He liked the idea of bribing Communist officials to sell us Communist weapons that could be used to kill Communists," retired U.S. General John Singlaub, who worked with Glatt in the 1980s, told me. "He thought that was neat."

Ready access to Soviet equipment and exemption from American laws also made Glatt a valuable source to the Foreign Materiel Acquisition Program, the "black" operation run by the three military services and the Defense Intelligence Agency. Unlike the CIA, which passed Russian matériel on to its Third World allies, the Pentagon used Eastern bloc equipment to test against their own equipment and design countermeasures. "What Glatt [along with other U.S.-linked dealers] was able to do just boggles the mind," says a former CIA official. "They were dealing with Communist officials at the highest levels and getting factory-fresh weapons out of the Eastern bloc. There was nothing money couldn't buy."

Indeed, it was Glatt's great wealth, which grew by leaps and bounds as he prospered in the arms trade, that often gave him a leg up on his rivals. Colonel Ryan recalls that he once had a jump on a deal but didn't have sufficient funds to secure a $7 million letter of credit needed to close it. As Ryan began the process of arranging a bank loan, Glatt used personal funds to secure a letter of credit, and the weapons in question disappeared from the market. Money was also vital in obtaining an end-user certificate showing a false destination—a piece of paper essential to any secret-weapons transaction. Viennese arms dealer Heinz Baumann said the going rate was around $50,000 and fondly remembered the flexibility of Peruvian officials in supplying this vital document. "If all the end-users issued over the years by Peru were legitimate, the country would have a bigger army than the United States," he said. A retired CIA agent waxed nostalgic over Chad in the same regard. "The country was poor, the government corrupt, communications almost nonexistent, and for a long time the Soviets didn't have representation there," he said. "It was an ideal situation." Glatt is said to have secured end-users from a variety of Third World countries, including Syria, Nigeria, and Oman, which was more or less run as a subsidiary of Western intelligence services.

Beyond that, Glatt's success stemmed from a keen intellect, a powerful personality, a fiercely competitive business drive, and what several arms dealers described as "steel nuts."

THE WEST AFRICA CONNECTION

Glatt's first major operation for the United States, and one that made him a small fortune, involved a 1977 deal to arm Somali dictator Muhammad Siad Barre. That year, Somalia and Ethiopia went to war over the disputed Ogaden region, a desolate stretch of desert lying between the two countries. Siad Barre had been the Soviet Union's closest client in Africa, but Moscow decided to back Ethiopia, which had been in the American orbit until a 1974 left-wing military coup. In the Ogaden conflict, The Carter Administration officially declared that it would play no part in the war, but the Pentagon, promising weapons and economic aid, quietly encouraged Siad Barre to break with the Soviets. "The Carter government clearly understood that the Horn of Africa was endangered," Glatt wrote me. "The situation in Iran had just started to worsen as well, and the support of Somalia became a necessity."

Fearing that the still sharp memories of Vietnam might provoke public opposition if U.S. involvement was exposed, the Pentagon gathered a web of foreign players to handle the deal. The Saudis, who frequently supported American covert activities, picked up the tab for the operation, which was coordinated by Glatt and ICW Systems, a private Swiss arms firm. Glatt, who had a personal relationship with the Somali defense minister, was in charge of securing the needed weapons, which he got from Technika, Hungary's state-owned arms company. He presented Hungarian officials with a fake end-user certificate showing that the arms were destined for Nigeria, which then had close relations with the Soviet Union.

Charged with moving the arms to Africa, Loftur Johannesson hired his friend Hank Warton, a freelance adventurer who owned the three Boeing 707s that carried the weapons from Hungary to Somalia. A German Jew, Warton fled the Nazi regime and joined the U.S. Army. After the war ended, he obtained a pilot's license under the G.I. Bill, and for the next two decades, until his doctor grounded him following a heart attack, Warton was almost always in the air. In the mid 1960s, he gained a certain notoriety when he ferried food and weapons to the Ibo tribe after it seceded from Nigeria and declared the independent state of Biafra. The Nigerian government ended the rebellion by cutting Biafra's links to the outside world—it

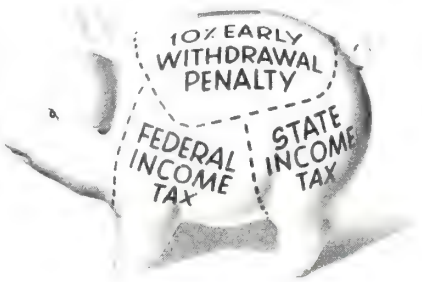
it a $250,000 bounty on Warton's ead for running the blockade ith the result that a million people ied from starvation and disease.

Now eighty-three, and still disbled from a crash landing he once nade in Cameroon, Warton recount-d his role in the Somalia episode as e sat in his apartment overlooking Miami Beach. Warton supplied the planes and rounded up crews to fly hem (including Larry Raab, a retired U.S. airman; Alberto Alberty, a Cuban exile who helped lead the Bay of Pigs operation; and Bill Lear Jr., on of the inventor of the Learjet). "The crews were mostly Americans, nd they weren't allowed to go to Budapest, which was behind the Iron Curtain and off-limits," Warton recalled. "Glatt said not to worry because it was all sanctioned by the CIA and was basically a CIA operation." Between runs from Budapest to Jeddah—where the Saudis let them ref uel—to Mogadishu, the pilots stayed in Salzburg,* where Glatt put them up at the Hotel Vollerhof. Between August and December of 1977, Warton's crews hauled 580 tons of weapons on twenty-eight separate flights to Mogadishu.

All went smoothly until a feud erupted between ICW and Glatt over dividing the profits. Like most arms dealers, Glatt was an ardent practitioner of what one broker calls the trade's First Commandment: Fuck Thy Neighbor. When the Swiss company tried to squeeze him out, Glatt leaked details of the airlift to newspapers in Switzerland and England, and the ensuing publicity shut the operation down. Still, from the U.S. perspective the operation was a rousing success. Siad Barre gave the United States rights to highly desirous naval and air bases. Things didn't turn out as well for Somalia itself. Ethiopian troops decimated Siad Barre's forces, inflicting some 100,000 civilian and military casualties. The United States maintained support for the dictator, and all the weaponry that poured into

Glatt attends the Salzburg Mozart festival every year; his wife's family helped found the festival. Glatt says, and at one time owned 50 percent of the librettos of another great Austrian composer, Johann Strauss.

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during the Nixon years and, following his brief career in the arms trade, became a Harvard law professor specializing in international business debts. Various pilots, ex-CIA characters occasionally dropped by Techaid's offices in hopes of drumming up deals for one or another of their projects. Of particular note was Sheila Petrie, a one-time burlesque dancer who had access to a small cargo plane and was running errands for Idi Amin, to whom she claimed to also sell French locomotives. "Do you have a good impression or a bad impression of Idi Amin?" she asked during my initial call. "Because my experience with him was very good."

This was the first major deal that Western arms dealers made with Romania, and it set the tone for those that followed. Transactions generally required Ceauşescu's brothers or the country's dictator, Nicolae Ceauşescu: Marin, who headed the Romanian trade mission in Vienna until 1989, when he committed suicide after Nicolae was overthrown and murdered; and Ilie, who served as deputy defense minister until being incarcerated in Bucharest. Nicolae Ceauşescu often took a cut himself. As a result, millions of Pentagon dollars found their way into Swiss bank accounts controlled by the Ceauşescu family.

In this case, according to a senior military official who read the relevant intelligence reports, Glatt paid Marin Ceauşescu, the Peruvian generals who supplied a bogus end user certificate, and officials aboard the *Klek*, the Yugoslav passenger freighter that picked up the Soviet personnel carriers at a Romanian port. The *Klek* headed for America, where [illegible] passengers were supposed to disembark and then the vehicles would disappear into the hands of army officials, bound for a military base in Charlottesville, Virginia. Perhaps the vessel stopped for commodity and tide. Nevertheless, the vehicles were unloaded before gaping passengers, who were furious about being delayed. Some talked to the press and an Associated Press story reported: "In a move tinged with [illegible]

tained some new Communist Warsaw Pact military equipment through a private company whose identity is being kept secret." Even worse, one passenger took a picture of the carriers that somehow got into the hands of Eastern bloc officials. "Heads probably rolled in Romania, but the vehicles finally ended up in Charlottesville," recalls the military official. The foul-up created a flap at the Pentagon and led to a bitter split between Johannesson and Glatt when the inevitable dispute arose over the division of spoils.

[illegible]

Somehow the fallout from the *Klek* didn't taint Glatt. Having established Romania as a major source of Soviet weaponry, he soon became the darling of the U.S. military. He established close personal friendships with a number of high-ranking military officials, hosting some at the Black Eagle or at his European estates. Over the years, Glatt conducted business of one sort or another with various retired military officers and spooks, among them General John Singlaub and General Ed Soyster, a former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency. One intelligence officer's daughter became the godmother to one of Glatt's grandchildren. Through his friendship with General Daniel Graham, Glatt helped the daughter of a retired general get a job at the High Frontier.

Nevertheless, he was not universally admired. "I'm no Pollyanna," says one former military officer. "You've got to deal with people you wouldn't want as friends. I've done a

[illegible] of paranoia and greed, and business partnerships [illegible] to know the real expenses being paid by the other partner," says Miley. "You may say you paid $250,000 in bribes and you may even [illegible]

member of the Dupont family.

ct of work in intelligence and I a
: pt that. But Glatt's political views
ere repugnant to any decent hu
an being." Another says, "Arro
gant. Dictatorial. Stubborn. Go
own the list of all the endearing
ualities of the German people and
Glatt has them."

By the time Ronald Reagan took
fice in 1981, however, U.S. intelli
ence agencies were fighting to court
Glatt. (Army Intelligence won out
nd became his main handler.) That
ear, the Pentagon threw a birthday
arty for Glatt at Washington's
George Town Club,* an exclusive pri
ate club where government insiders
nd prominent locals discreetly gath
r to discuss affairs of state. Held on
he same night that then vice presi
lent George Bush was feted in anoth
r part of the club, Glatt's birthday
arty was a heady affair, hosted by
lub cofounder Milton Notting
am—a friend and sometime ship
ing agent for Glatt—and attended
y senior intelligence officials, gener
ls, and bankers who laundered mon
y for the Pentagon's "black" pro
grams. The George Town Club is
ecretive (membership is usually re
ealed only in one's obituary), but
Colonel Ryan, who attended the par
y, describes the club as elegant yet
eserved. "It bespeaks good taste,
ower, and sophistication. . . . There
re no Robert Hall suits to be found
nywhere."

On several occasions, I spoke with
Ryan at his Washington-area bou
ique-weapons firm; the nondescript
ffice was notable only for a sign-in
heet that asks visitors to declare if
heir appointment is of a classified
nature. "There were some people
who felt Glatt was not a nice man.
But who cares?" he told me. "West
rn civilization required his ser
vices." Didn't anyone object to his
hoice of the Black Eagle—a symbol
f Nazi Germany—as a name for his
Virginia property? I asked. Not at all,
Ryan replied: "Glatt was viewed as a

*The club was founded in 1966 by power brokers such as Robert Gray, head of Hill & Knowlton; FDR aide Thomas "Tommy the Cork" Corcoran; and Longum Park, later revealed to be a South Korean cover for alleged members of Congress who, [illegible] to influence policy on Korea.

source, potentially our most [illegible]
tive source, of Russian intel. We
weren't considering [illegible]
ship, we were hunting for Soviet
weapons that had great military val
ue to the United States. The more
virulently right-wing he was, the
more we felt comfortable with him
because we knew he wouldn't deal
with the Russians. We weren't run
ning a de-Nazification program. If he
wanted to call his farm the Black Ea
gle, that was his business. We
weren't going to tell him what to
name his property."

Ryan's point is logical, but such
ends justify the means paternalism
has also led U.S. intelligence agen
cies to hire assassins, rig elections,
and arm fanatical guerrillas. "Gov
ernments need gunrunners and arms
dealers because they don't want to
put the question of whether the
cause they are supporting is accept
able to their own populations," says
Jack Blum, former special counsel to
the Senate Foreign Relations Com
mittee. "To me that is disdain for the
democratic process. If they believe in
the cause they should be willing to
face losing the next election." But
why run that risk when you can wrap
yourself in the flag and claim to
know what's best? Arms dealers jus
tify their actions with the same sour
mix of pragmatism and patriotism as
intelligence operatives (and, given
the revolving door between the two
professions, the distinction is often
mostly semantic). Governments sell
some 90 percent of the world's mili
tary arms, they point out; besides,
"guns don't kill people"—a philoso
phy that evidently remains just as
soothing when writ large. And when
you're operating at the behest of the
U.S. government, you can also take
additional comfort in the "I was just
following orders" defense. But as Dr.
Daniel N. Nelson of the Marshall
Center points out, "No one who
transfers weapons across borders can
excuse or rationalize his activity on
the basis of presumed governmental
approval. The people who profit bear
the burden of their own decisions. If I
sell you a weapon to kill someone—
knowing that you will kill with it—I
cannot create a case for my norma
tive exoneration based on govern-

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and retribution."
—Simon Singh, author of
Fermat's Enigma



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United States was arming (directly
them, and 40 wars were being waged.
Ronald Reagan's CIA director,
tunda-

Afghanistan I never had my feel
ings," he wrote. "It is my understand
ing that this was done by protes
tors in the special type of
frames." While technically correct,
I later learned that the reply was a
classic Glatt stunt. According to at
least three intelligence sources, Glatt
bought huge quantities of weapons
for the mujahedin—land mines,
grenades, rifles, machine guns, and
other small arms—from CENZIN,
the Polish state arms agency. How
ever, his client was not the mujahedin
but U.S. Army Intelligence, which
turned the material over to the CIA,
which in turn transported the
weapons to depots the agency set up
in Pakistan. From there, Pakistani
agents sent Glatt's provisions across
the border into Afghanistan for dis
tribution to the guerrillas.

Glatt's biggest find for the muja
hedin were hundreds of Russian-
made Strela-1 shoulder-launched
surface-to-air missiles. Glatt
arranged for a Polish plane to carry
the Strelas to a military airstrip in
Oman, where it was met by an
American plane, which then depart
ed for a U.S. naval base at Diego
Garcia in the Indian Ocean. From
there, the Strelas were shipped to
the CIA depots in Pakistan. The
mujahedin used the Strelas against
helicopter gunships flown by Soviet
pilots, and although they weren't
nearly as effective as the American
Stingers the CIA began send
ing in 1986 they prevented pilots
from acting imperviously. "We want
[ed] the Russians to see their losses
exploding and [it was] demoralizing to
[have] your own weapons being
fired at you," says a person directly
involved in the Strela deal.

In the summer of 1987 the Iran-
Contra hearings were broadcast
live to a rapt television audience
across the nation's screens of
death on such public display. Glatt
had, of course, played a part in the
affair that the FBI took
extraordinary measures to protect Glatt's in
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beauty queen Barbara Studley. Ther
a right-wing radio host in Miami
Studley had gathered archconserva
tive military and political leaders t
establish a Washington-based arm
company called GeoMiliTech Con
sultants Corporation (GMT). He
board members and employees in
cluded General Singlaub, head o
the World Anti-Communist League
John Carbaugh, a top aide to Sena
tor Jesse Helms; and Rober
Schweitzer, an army general who su
pervised Oliver North at the Na
tional Security Council until he wa
fired in 1982 for declaring to a re
porter that the Russians were prepar
ing to invade Poland. In his Iran
Contra deposition, Schweitzer sai
the real meaning of GMT's initial
was "God's Mighty Team."

Within GMT, Studley was known
by the code name of "Cleo," as in
Cleopatra, and Glatt—"The Baron"
—was her arms dealer of choice. (In
internal memos I obtained, GMT
dubbed rocket launchers "mothers
and rockets "children.") Through
Glatt's longtime financial adviser
Eddy Maisonneuve of the Banque
Nationale de Paris in Geneva, Stud
ley set up a Swiss account to handl
GMT's funds.

GMT was one of the three impor
tant suppliers to the Nicaraguan
Contras, the other two being The
Enterprise of Oliver North and re
tired Air Force major genera
Richard Secord, and the Honduras
based Arms Supermarket run by
Ronald Martin, the CIA-linked arms
dealer based in Miami who was or
Petty's list. Studley declined a re
quest for an interview, but I di
speak with Singlaub at the 1998 *Sol
dier of Fortune* convention in Las Ve
gas, an annual affair at which the re
tired general is a perennial VIP. The
four-day event culminated at a
shooting range on the outskirts of Las
Vegas, where conventioneers ma
chine-gunned and dynamited a white
van with the words "Bin Laden's Ex
plosives Express, Worldwide Deliver
ies" painted on its side. Peter Kokalis
an *SOF* editor, emceed the assault
telling jokes. "What do you get when
you cross a bisexual Communist with
a congenital liar? Answer: Chelse
Clinton—and berating reporters in

...ntendance for being a bunch of pro-...assed liberals.

Inside the vast exhibition hall ...nted by SOF, exhibition booths ex-...ted a vast array of arms and ammu-...tion, photo ops with women clad ...n American-flag bikinis, and spa-...ious underground bunkers where ...nvers could comfortably ride out the ...pocalypse. I caught up with Sing-...aub as he signed copies of his 1991 ...utobiography, *Hazardous Duty*. I ...ad read Singlaub's book, which ...entions a Western European arms ...ealer referred to only as "Sam." Yes, Singlaub conceded, Sam is a pseudo-...ym for Glatt, who came to GMI ...n the recommendation of two old ...riends—General Daniel Graham, ...who had held top positions at both ...he CIA and the DIA, and CIA Di-...ector William Casey. Singlaub first ...net Glatt in early 1985, at the Palm ...Court of Washington's Sheraton ...arlton Hotel. According to *Haz-...ardous Duty*, Studley and a top Con-...tra official, Adolfo Calero, were also ...in attendance.

"As he perused the shopping list I had drawn up with [Contra leader] Enrique Bermudez, Sam nodded calmly and made notes on a pad with a cheap mechanical pencil. He might as well have been pricing out a plumbing job. Sam looked up and said he could procure brand-new, high-quality Polish AKMS-47 assault rifles in quantity for only $135 each.

"Barbara and I looked at each other. We had learned that AK-47s normally retailed for between $200 and $300 on the international arms market. These were the lowest prices we had ever heard quoted.

"'This is new equipment?' I asked.

"'New from the factory,' Sam assured us. 'This is even better than Soviet manufacture.'

"'Why are the prices so low?' Barbara asked.

"Sam shrugged. 'I'm a good client.'"

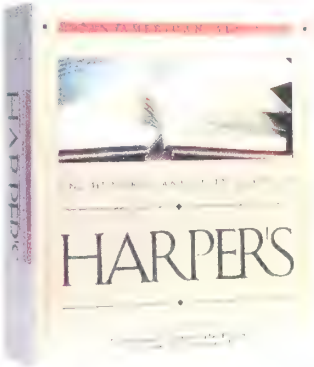
The deal under discussion came to-

Singlaub ... [illegible] ... Tactical ... Vietnam ... Hazardous ... Singlaub ... Latter ... knew ... T.J. Sanders ... I.C.O.I.C. ... I.C.O.I.Z. ...

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[illegible] in May 1985, [illegible] with the Boland Amendment forbidding any U.S. aid, [illegible] certificate from Syria, Singlaub reportedly [illegible] matériel. From there, the weapons (in [illegible] were [illegible] shoulder-fired anti-aircraft rockets) [illegible] Central America. Hamilton subsequently described the shipment as the "biggest [illegible] for the Contras [illegible] private arms suppliers.

Glatt's low prices threatened The Enterprise's profits, and Oliver North went to Casey and blackballed Glatt [illegible] story that the German [illegible] was a double agent. (North told me he'd never heard of Glatt, which is hard to fathom given that Glatt's name appears several times in North's [illegible] National Security Council diaries.) Ron Martin was also displeased. He [illegible] dispatched an employee to [illegible] announced call at the Polish Embassy in Washington; to the horror of [illegible] there he demanded that the Army's [illegible] be offered [illegible] at the same prices. "It took all of 8 min. of considerable diplomatic intervention and probably a fair amount of [illegible] to calm down the [illegible] government officials," Singlaub writes in *Hazardous Duty*.

The [illegible] Ariane Glatt and Singlaub [illegible] compromised the CIA [illegible] cover. The [illegible] a pattern of [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

nship with Lieutenant Colonel
rry Caylor, who headed the army
MA office from 1985 to 1991 and
on retirement went to work as
latt's assistant in the arms business.

The FMA's precise budget is hid-
n in the Pentagon's "black" ac-
unt ("It's a democracy, but there
e ways of being creative," one play-
said), but I was told that over
00 million per year was allocated
the program throughout much of
e 1980s. The FMA's black dollars
ere laundered by a Washington
anch of the American Security
ank (now owned by Bank of Amer-
a), where the Pentagon and the
eltway firms set up accounts for
eir respective dummy corpora-
ons. "We were asked to do it as a
vor to the U.S. government, to do
ur patriotic duty," says former
merican Security executive
mes Kleindienst. "We didn't
ow what the hell they were
uying, and we didn't want to
now. What made me feel damn
ood was that after the Gulf
ar I got a call from some-
ody—I won't mention who—at the
ig house there in Virginia saying
hat thanks to all your work we
new what that bastard Saddam
ussein had."

The FMA sometimes revealed
normous problems with U.S.
eapons systems. In 1984, an Israeli
rms dealer helped to obtain a Sovi-
t-made attack helicopter that was
rought to a military testing ground
nd matched up against a fantasti-
ally expensive anti-aircraft gun
alled the DIVAD. Made by a sub-
idiary of the Ford Motor Company,
he DIVAD was designed to home in
n the sound of helicopter blades.
The demonstration not only showed
hat the range of the Russian attack
elicopter surpassed that of the
IVAD but revealed in embarrass-
ng fashion that the DIVAD's hom-
ng mechanism was fatally flawed.
ince a number of military poobahs
ttended the demonstration, some-
ne decided to install a portable toi-
et near the V.I.P. bleachers. To en-
ure that the generals faced no
npleasant aromas, a fan was in-
talled in the outhouse. In the midst
f the test, the DIVAD's guns mis-
took the sound of the fan for heli-
copter blades, swiveled on the chas-
sis, and blew the (empty) outhouse
to smithereens. Defense Secretary
Caspar Weinberger immediately
killed the DIVAD program.

Glatt declined to discuss his work
for the FMA, so I paid a visit to
Heinz Baumann, who has brokered
deals on behalf of BDM and Elec-
tronic Warfare Associates. Now re-
tired, Baumann resides in Bad Ha-
chau, a spa town in the hills outside
of Vienna. I was put in touch with
him by John Miley, who e-mailed
me: "[Heinz] is one hellluva nice
guy . . . I suspect you'll be expected to
partake of a healthy ration of
schnapps. Might be useful to go
with the flow and then do the nec-
essary penance." This advice proved
prescient. Wearing a leather jacket
and jeans, Baumann was waiting at
the international arrivals area and,
though it was only 11 A.M., escorted
me to an airport bar for three
rounds of beer and schnapps. We
then moved on to his comfortable
home, where over many more glass-
es of beer he reminisced about his
biggest coup, purchasing infrared-
seeking missile heads from the
Ukraine, and other FMA deals. For
each successful transaction—and
the process could take up to a year
from start to finish—many more fell
by the wayside. "There was no
steady income," Baumann sighed,
lifting his glass. "In this business
you have to be a dreamer." He
paused and ground out another cig-
arette. "You couldn't get a screw out
of the Eastern bloc without bribes. I
wouldn't call it a bribe; it was a re-
imbursement for services. If they
did a good job, they deserved the
money." (Sometimes, in addition to
money, they wanted Western elec-
tronics. Miley recalls always provid-
ing Chinese officials with current is-
sues of *Playboy* and *Penthouse*:
"Quite a few bottles of Tsingtao
beer were consumed [in order to
reach] the [breakthrough]
way . . . of the W[illiam]
Colonel R[ay], Ruritania to [illegible]
agra.")

According to Baumann and oth-
ers, Glatt had cut a [illegible] deal
/IN, the Polish state arms company.
Glatt became close friends with
CENZIN's head, General Bogusław
Likowski, a man known affectionately
as Bolo. "Bolo was the key at
CENZIN, but he was also the man-
aging director for all FMA business
in Europe," Baumann said. "When
he told you that a piece from Bulgaria
will arrive at three o'clock tomor-
row, it was there at five to three.
He knew about all the deliveries,
who was involved, and who to call if
there was trouble."

WE ARMED DUBIOUS ALLIES ONLY TO SEE THEM TURN AGAINST US, AND SOMETIMES TURN THE VERY WEAPONS WE SUPPLIED UPON US

Over the years, CENZIN sold Glatt
everything from an antidote kit issued
to Soviet soldiers in Afghanistan to
protect them against their own chem-
ical weapons (by analyzing it, the Pen-
tagon could better understand the So-
viet chemical-weapons program) to
three Russian-made torpedoes worth
$3.5 million. In the mid-1980s, Likows-
ki died in a car crash, but Glatt re-
mained in good standing at CENZIN
through his ties to two other key offi-
cials, Zbigniew Lufka and Tadeusz Kop-
erwas. They were arrested in 1992 in a
sting operation conducted by U.S. Cus-
toms agents in Frankfurt and accused of
illegally attempting to sell $15 million
worth of weapons to Iraq. The charges
were later dropped, reportedly at the re-
quest of the CIA, which was grateful for
their service to the United States.

Glatt has credited NATO's easy
success in Kosovo to his work with the
FMA, saying he had bought every-
thing in Serbia's arsenal years ago. Yet
the FMA has seen as much profiteer-
ing as patriotism. In 1995, Victor's of-
fices were raided by federal officials
who claimed that, among other things,
the company was double-dealing: trad-
ing highly sensitive Stinger missile

technology with the Chinese in order to obtain Chinese weaponry to sell to the United States.

THE COLD WAR LEGACIES

With the end of the Cold War, the world of gunrunning has been radically transformed. The C.I.A. still stages covert operations but nothing on the scale of the huge Reagan/Bush–era programs, and now that the conflict in the Balkans is relatively contained, there are no decent wars to speak of. The Russian Army has dumped huge quantities of small arms in the course of its brutal downsizing, and China, which is in the process of rearming its troops, recently added another 2 million old rifles to the global arms pile. Combined with the growing production of countries such as the Czech Republic, Pakistan, and Israel, the end result is a textbook case of oversupply and underdemand.

The players have changed, too. Where once a few mega-brokers held sway, today hundreds of small-time mafiosos who also traffic in drugs and prostitutes have emerged. "The old guys could get a pistol and a tank," says Keith Prager, a former weapons-trade specialist for U.S. Customs. "The new guys can get one or the other, but not both. They're the kindergarten class compared to the old Ph.D.'s." Some former Communist states, most notably Bulgaria, sell arms to embargoed regimes and controversial clients without the help of middlemen, further narrowing the domain of brokers who exploited Soviet bloc contacts. "Ten years ago, if you wanted to get something into Iran, you had to go through Glatt," says a Washington-area arms broker. "Now anyone can show up in Eastern Europe with an end-user certificate and buy whatever he wants."

Glatt is now seventy-two, and he likes to portray himself as retired. Slowed in recent years by a heart bypass and a bout with cancer, he spends more time with his family and has taken up philanthropy. He has paid for an irrigation system for Swiss farmers, inoculations for Polish newborns, and is a large donor to his alma mater, Heidelberg. At the behest of the eminent American cardiologist Dr. Robert Mendelsohn (who once treated the cardinal of Hungary and offered to put up $2.2 million to help finance a heart laboratory for a Catholic hospital in Budapest. "My 'charitable activities' are my tribute for having had a wonderful and interesting life," Glatt wrote me. "But I do not want to talk about it. I am not a Pharisee!"

But if, as he insists, arms now make up a much smaller part of his business activities, he remains a player. Glatt still hosts High Frontier conferences at his various estates, and since 1996 he has carried out at least two large deals for the FMA. China and North Korea are currently targets, as is Russia, which is no longer an official "enemy" but which sells to countries that are. Now matériel comes straight out of the Kremlin, which is so broke that it is willing to sell virtually anything—short of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons—to the United States. In one of those bizarre twists in the arms world, the Russian military uses the Pentagon's money to finance its next generation of weaponry. Rosvoorouzhenie, the Russian state arms agency, publishes a glossy seven-volume sales catalogue that includes everthing from small arms to submarines, planes, and even warheads. Such an atlas would have constituted the single biggest intelligence find of the Cold War; now it's available for $1,500.

Yet Moscow and Washington still insist on the use of middlemen who can play the enduring role of scapegoat in the event that things go sour. And as always, Glatt has positioned himself well. Some years ago a Russian general needed a hip replacement. The general—now in a position of some power—couldn't afford the operation, so Glatt paid for it himself. And as corporations start to eclipse nation-states, arms deals may be decided by board meetings. In 1997, a private company seeking to do business in Azerbaijan came up with four options to curry favor with the government, one of which was to broker a $20 million arms deal for the country, which is under sanction for its aggression against Armenia. The firm chose another course of action but had identified Glatt as the preferred supplier if the arms plan were to move forward. "There are a lot of fly-by-nights in the private arms business," says a person familiar with the details. "Glatt has been around, and he's trustworthy. He's one of on four or five men in the world who ca quickly obtain and transport large quan tities of Russian equipment."

Like Glatt, many of the other arm dealers who supplied Cold War con batants continue to profit from the w business. In 1998, Barbara Studley an John Singlaub tried to sell an Israe missile guidance system to the Ame ican government. Ron Martin's com pany advertises itself on the Wor Wide Web as "The #1 Supplier of 4 mm Grenade Launchers." Richard S cord was seen not long ago in Aze baijan, attempting to sell its military package of equipment and trainin Sarkis Soghanalian, who has offic on the Champs Elysées and worl closely with French intelligenc helped funnel weapons to the milita officers who overthrew the president the Congo Republic in 1997. "There nothing as big as the Iran-Iraq War, b there's still a lot going on," he told n from Paris during a phone intervie "The countries change, but there's ways business." (Indeed. A few mont later he was arrested in the Unit States on bank-fraud and money-lau dering charges.) Even Oliver Nort the would-be senator and talk-sh host, heads a floundering body-arm company called Guardian Technol gies International. "Every time y think one of these guys has died turns up somewhere peddling arm says an American weapons broker wh himself still dabbles in the field. "The guys never die. Once you're in t business, you're in the business."

And why not? Arms dealing is extremely profitable enterprise co ducted remotely by fax and wire tra fer. Unlike soldiers, arms dealers rare put their own lives on the line and ne er have to confront the carnage caus by the weapons they sell. To them th trade is a game: a lot of money, a lit espionage, but few personal cons quences. As long as governments e ploy them, arms dealers like Glatt w grow rich and old and happily live o their days in the shadow of patriotis For the moment, there may be less bu ness than in the 1980s, but as S. Cummings once noted, "In the broa est sense, the military arms busines based on human folly. And that is extremely reliable element."

SHOW THEM THE MONEY

On winning equal rights for wealthy Americans

By Nick Bromell



April 1, 2000

Dear Successful American:

On behalf of the National Enterprise Initiative, I invite you to join an exclusive and extraordinarily influential circle of fellow citizens who are linked by a common ideal and purpose: to promote wealth tolerance at home and abroad. Our aim is nothing less than to win for the wealthiest Americans the same rights enjoyed by their countrymen: the right to be respected for who they are, the right to live free of prejudice, the right to privacy, the right to speak their minds. In short, the right to be Americans.

The National Enterprise Initiative (NEI) was founded in 1973 by the economists, businessmen, and academic experts who crafted the policies that led to the electoral victories of Ronald Reagan and George Bush and that culminated in the sweeping victories of Newt Gingrich and a generation of younger Republicans. Few outside this circle know that these policies had their inception in the brilliant theorems devised by Professor Lawrence Eucher at Harvard's Center for Wealth and Public Policy. Now known within NEI as "Eucher's Law," these theorems postulate that:

- Public **wealth tolerance** rises in direct relation to the degree of wealth accumulated by *individuals*. Conversely, wealth tolerance is eroded by public perception that wealth is accumulated by *institutions*.
- Public **wealth tolerance** becomes **wealth respect** as individual wealth approaches $150 million.
- **Wealth respect** becomes **wealth awe** as individual wealth surpasses the level of $1 billion.

Thanks in large part to the silent but tireless efforts of NEI, these simple observations have dramatically revolutionized public and corporate policy during the past twenty years. During that span we have witnessed, among other achievements, tax policies that return wealth to successful Americans like yourself, trade policies that permit wealth the same freedom of movement guaranteed to all Americans under the Constitution, and banking policies that permit accumulation of capital to return to the levels enjoyed before 1913 (when the graduated income tax was established). Although many Americans believe that these successes stem from changes in fiscal policy or from vigorous Republican political coalition-building, members of NEI know that the primary cause is much simpler and more effective: the systematic promotion of **wealth tolerance** and the encouragement of **wealth awe**.

Nick Bromell, the accidental recipient of this letter, is the author of Tomorrow Never Knows: Rock and Psychedelics in the 1960s, *to be published next fall.*

Illustration by Steve Brodner

[illegible] when Americans as [illegible] believe that wealth is within their reach, they will respect the wealth [illegible] for Americans to believe that wealth is within reach, the more [illegible] concerned, with unremitting vividness, about the wealth [illegible]. Prior to Dr. Eucher's theorems, most strategists believed that wealth should be concealed from public view in order to contain wealth envy. Eucher's Law made clear that the opposite was true: Wealth must be seen in order to be protected.

Hay/NEI's first working paper (1974) proposed that every effort be made to disseminate wealth knowledge through the media, an initiative that has resulted in a 37 percent increase in favorable public attitudes toward individual capital accumulation. In particular, the Bold decision (1980) to focus media attention on individual salaries and compensations has raised the threshold of public tolerance for executive and shareholder remuneration to levels far exceeding the norms of the 1970s. Indeed, the typical business executive surveyed by NEI in 1978 regarded executive compensation above $1 million as "excessive" and above $2 million as "certainly unfair." By 1996, following implementation of NEI's recommendation (1992) that the public be continuously apprised of the compensation levels of star athletes, rock musicians, classical pianists, authors of bestsellers, and the like (all of whom manifestly "earn" their capital accumulation by dint of "hard work," "talent," and "drive"), **public attitudes toward executive compensation had shifted dramatically toward increased tolerance.** The [illegible] trend continues [illegible] The average focus group today regards executive compensation above $50 million as "possibly excessive," while compensation [illegible] million is now seen as [illegible] [illegible]

The [illegible] NEI's [illegible] **continued downward trend in calls for wealth redistribution** [illegible] liberal [illegible] [illegible] radical publications, or so-called public interest groups. Our annual analysis of the Congressional Record counted only two anti-wealth-accumulation speeches from the floor. There was not a single anti-wealth-accumulation feature story, essay, or opinion piece in any major newspaper, news magazine, or television or radio talk show. And continuing a trend begun in 1996, left-wing "public interest" groups are focusing increasingly on soft issues like environmental protection, gun control, and education rather than higher taxes, market regulation, and job security. Overall, NEI's strategy (see Working Paper No. 7) of forcing these groups to fight for newsworthiness in a highly competitive environment has forced anti-wealth advocates to "personalize" and "dramatize" their issues, thus further decreasing the likelihood of their producing a systemic critique of individual capital accumulation. The recent AOL–Time Warner merger signals more good news for wealth tolerance.

Thanks in large part to NEI, the past year has also seen **new records set both in executive compensation and in wealth accumulation** across a broad array of vehicles and modalities, with mergers, acquisitions, and IPOs leading the way. According to a survey in *BusinessWeek* (where, again, focus was kept exclusively on individual compensation rather than corporate earnings), the twenty highest-paid executives earned as "total pay" the sum of $2,024,240,000.00. Nearly one half of the nation's 200 largest companies awarded top executives compensation worth at least $10 million. And, of course, the news media reported no fewer than 1,700 times that Bill Gates of Microsoft has a net worth of approximately $87 billion.

Americans respond to the publication of figures like these with what NEI analyst Riccardo DiGrazia at Brigham Young University has so aptly called a "cult of the plutocratic sublime." The average American regards with stunned reverence any number higher than 100 million. Whether the subject be stars in space, molecules on the head of a pin, or the dollar value of a CEO's stock options, the apparent paradox of counting the uncountably immense provokes what NEI consultant Bob Jones of Stanford's School of Medicine has described as "a neurological traffic jam." "The human brain experiences something like a confrontation with its own limits, while at the same time reaching beyond itself in order to comprehend what is theoretically no more than the addition of one to one to one. . . . In terms of neurochemistry, the flood of serotonins produced by this encounter bears close resemblance to the so-called religious experience and to the pharmacology of shamanistic stimulants like *Amanita muscaria* and *Belladona vulgari*."

NEI's research team, headed by Dr. Jones, continues to study the psychochemistry of human response to wealth accumulation. Recently, in yet another confirmation of Eucher's Law, it found that Americans typically process information about capital accumulations exceeding $1 billion in two ways. They *mystify* them, in effect abstracting them from concrete particulars into a diffuse, invisible ontology, analogous to what sociologist Peter Berger has called "the sacred canopy." Large-scale capital accumulations reinforce the average citizen's belief in the existence of an underlying, beneficent order that is at once unknowable and all-powerful.[3]

The second social response to

Fiscal year 1999 saw substantial investment in pharmaceutical research into the production of synthetic wealth-tolerance enhancers. WTEs—after the Wall Street Journal reported that investigators at United Pharmaceuticals had established a link between erectile dysfunction (ED) and wealth envy (WE), thereby strengthening scientific interest in molecular analogies between ED-curing therapies (e.g., Viagra) and WTEs.

Dr. Eucher and his colleagues at the Harvard Center have hypothesized that the greatest popularity of public lotteries with jackpots in excess of $50 million represents a social response similar to the homeopathic magic of primitive cultures. "By putting an analogue of the ineffable within reach," they observe, "citizens are given the comfort of feeling 'control' over the magical. After all, anyone can win the lottery."

ı ge scale wealth accumulation is
ulation. Just as primitive peoples
.orned themselves with symbols of
:tility in order to emulate the fe-
.nd powers of the Earth Mother, so
ıdern men and women continu-
ısly appropriate the symbols of
ealth in order to participate as cele-
ants in the "cult of the plutocratic
blime." As University of Chicago
olitical scientist D. A. Miller has
oted, "The political consequences
this phenomenon have been per-
ctly clear at least since 1980. As
ng as the *symbols* of wealth are
ithin reach of the average citizen,
: cares nothing about the so-called
ap separating him from the truly
ealthy."[1]

In sum, **the more Americans are old about the capital accumulation f individuals, the more tolerant of ealth accumulation they become**. Then they read that Yankee short-top Derek Jeter might earn more ıan $118 million, or that an Inter-et venture capitalist reaped $800 illion with his IPO, their wealth espect rises and their wealth envy alls.

Fifty years ago, the highest-paid xecutive in the United States arned $509,000, or 194 times more han the average worker. Many oices were raised in complaint, and ngry stockholders mounted a num-er of initiatives to reduce what hey saw as "outrageous" executive ompensation. In 1998, by contrast, he highest-paid executive earned 575.6 million, or 25,000 times nore than the average worker. No rotest was heard.

The lesson is clear: Eucher's Law ontinues to hold true.

But NEI's work is not done. At his, the dawn of a new millennium, nd with a national election ap-

proaching, NEI has developed new policies and strategies for the promotion of wealth tolerance. We believe that these will be more effective than ever and that by 2015 we will have reached our long-term goal of 85 percent wealth tolerance (including 40 percent wealth respect and 20 percent wealth awe) among Americans. We need the help of you and every other successful American to achieve the following initiatives:

- **Accelerate the affiliation of wealth with national electoral politics.** Following the landmark 1976 Supreme Court case of *Buckley v. Valeo* (in which the Justices were strongly influenced by NEI's amicus curiae brief), the expenditure of money in political elections has been protected as a First Amendment right of free speech. Subsequently, we have seen the total cost of elections rise dramatically (to $2.13 billion in 1996), thereby ensuring that Americans maintain the right to advocate and promote wealth tolerance. In this election season, presidential candidate George W. Bush, strongly supported by NEI's executive council, has already raised $70 million. Encouraged by these trends, NEI has set target goals for the cost of the 2008 elections: president, $250 million; senator, $100 million; and congressman, $50 million. Calls for so-called campaign finance reform continue to be heard here and there, and until these are silenced NEI believes that the best strategy is simply to accelerate trends already under way.
- **Enact legislation promoting wealth mobility.** Wealth mobility has always been one of NEI's highest priorities, and for more than twenty years we have worked unabatingly to have the capital-gains tax repealed. Today, however, this goal is more important than ever. Only the achievement of complete wealth mobility will allow Americans like yourself to withdraw investments from the stock and bond markets rapidly and without penalty when these markets take their inevitable downward plunge. Wealthy Americans pay literally billions of dollars each year for investment advice that keeps them a step ahead of the less successful. But what good is that advice if the tax code prevents you from liquidating your position instantly, safely, and at no tax cost? NEI's analysts forecast the advent of a significant and prolonged downturn by the year 2005. It is imperative, therefore, that total wealth mobility be achieved even sooner.
- **Purchase transnational wealth-development zones.** Your right to wealth mobility is meaningful only if there is a place for your wealth to go. While the new global economy and the enactment of free-trade legislation like NAFTA help provide such places, they do so at great risk—witness the collapse of the Southeast Asian "miracle" at the end of the 1990s. Consequently, NEI recommends the establishment of transnational wealth-development zones—regions purchased from nations willing to sell portions of their territory (or exchange them for prospects of development and job creation) to groups of wealthy investors who would then be free of *all* the encumbrances of national and international legislation. The outright purchase of Mexico should be our first goal, followed by Cuba as soon as Castro dies. Thailand, which is beginning to recover from its troubles, also presents an interesting opportunity, and the resource-rich countries of central Africa, despite their turmoil and warfare, hold enormous promise. Indeed, NEI believes that the long-term outcome of the global economy will be the proliferation of such zones, leading possibly to the complete replacement of nation-states by wholly privatized investment regions.
- **Vigorously combat the narrow-minded ideologues who exploit wealth envy and promote wealth**

[1] *This has recently been dubbed "luxury ıathesis." See Cash et al., "Symbolic Capital and the Marketing of High-End Durables." Proceedings of the University of Michigan Institute for the Study of Consumer Psychology, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Ann Arbor, Feb. 1980), pp. 178–97. The authors wrote (p. 184): "There is a direct and predictable relation between proliferation of supererogatory capital accumulation modalities and public tolerance of elevated price levels for so-called luxury durables. As the one rises, the other can and must follow suit."*

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intolerance. Clearly, America has come a long way since the wake-up call of 1968, when wealth intolerance exploded into civil insurrection. The monopoly once enjoyed by left-wing think tanks and opinion magazines has been replaced by a free market of ideas in which advocates of wealth tolerance have thrived. Magazines like *Martha Stewart Living* and *The New Republic* are controlled by wealthy individuals who have courageously promoted wealth tolerance. Conservative think tanks have been generously funded by wealthy individuals and have transformed the intellectual climate of the nation, making wealth a respectable idea, not just a hard fact. These trends have been reinforced by the synergistic integration of media outlets achieved by pioneers like Rupert Murdoch and Ted Turner. And thanks in large part to the recommendations developed by NEI in conjunction with the Pew Charitable Trusts, higher education has been transformed from a last bastion of Sixties radicals to an increasingly privatized sphere accountable to those who fund it. NEI's systematic exposure of the shortcomings of public education at every level has led to the popularity of the voucher system, the withdrawal of public support and funding for education, and the approaching extinction of this last anomaly in a nation devoted to free ideas in a free market.[5]

Nevertheless, like so many other forms of virulent prejudice, wealth intolerance continues to breed in dark corners and dingy rooms. The Supreme Court's recent *Nixon* v. *Shrink Missouri* decision poses a sudden and grave threat to our goal of fully privatizing electoral politics. NEI also notes with particular concern the implications of increased online information marketing and distribution. Notwithstanding the heroic efforts of Microsoft to achieve the same measure of consolidation in this market that it has managed in the computer software industry, Internet access remains deplorably unrestricted and poses a grave threat to free market competition. (As Dr. Eucher has observed, "Competition becomes impractical when competitors become too numerous.") Consequently, NEI has established a commission made up of members in appropriate areas to both study and implement chaos-reduction strategies. If pursued aggressively, these will guarantee our freedom from misinformation about capital accumulation and from wealth intolerance in particular.

Obviously, these goals are as ambitious as they are sensible. They cannot be achieved unless individuals like yourself work together to make the dream of national wealth tolerance become a reality. You don't need to be told that successful Americans have made this country great and yet live here with their most fundamental, constitutionally protected rights trampled upon or disregarded.

And so we ask you to join us. Join NEI.

Using the encrypted password you recently received by e-mail, you may visit our Web site and learn more about us. Obviously, we write to you in strictest confidence. NEI is not for everyone, nor is information about it. And should you decide to join NEI, you may rest assured that your membership, too, will remain private. Chances are you'll find that you've entered a circle to which you already belong and that your closest friends are standing ready to greet you.

Sincerely and confidentially,

Ross Walker Forbes, II
Founder and President

NEI notes with satisfaction not only the existence of the so-called "adjunct ideal" as a term, and the proliferation of adjunct positions in public higher education across the board, but the teaching ratio at the bellwether University of California system (most of which is done by adjunct professors). Clearly, intellectuals with tenure are exempted from the rules of the free market, while adjuncts deprived of the unfair advantage of lifetime job security will be more open to market discipline and wage reductions.



ONE MAN AS AN ISLAND

How Winston Churchill saved the world

By Michael Korda

Discussed in this essay:

Five Days in London, May 1940, by John Lukacs. Yale University Press, 288 pages, $19.95.

January's controversy over who should have been *Time* magazine's "Man of the Century" was reported to have ended in a choice between Albert Einstein and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Disappointingly, the magazine chose Einstein (even all these years after Henry Luce's death, there seems to be an anti-FDR bias floating around in the Time-Life Building, like Legionnaires' disease embedded in the air vents). After all, FDR saved the United States from total collapse in 1933, and perhaps only he could have transformed his country into not only "the great arsenal of democracy" that it became but, arguably, the world's greatest—and most benevolent—power from 1945 on. Furthermore, had he not possessed the good sense to take Einstein's famous letter seriously, the atomic bomb might never have been developed or might have been developed first by the enemy.

The truth, however, is that one man, and one man only, was the logical choice for Man of the Century. John Lukacs's superb new book, *Five Days in London*—the title refers to the brief period in the spring of 1940, when Winston Churchill had to convince his cabinet to keep fighting against Germany rather than seek a way out of the war—makes clear why. Not only did Churchill's checkered political career span more than half of the century (he was first elected to Parliament in 1900, much put off by the Boer War, and resigned as prime minister on April 5, 1955), but it can truly be said that, as of perhaps no other figure of the twentieth century, that he saved the Western world. Had Churchill not lived—or had he been fatally run over, for example, he was struck by a car on Fifth Avenue in 1931 (he was crossing the avenue on foot and had forgotten that Americans drive on the right side of the road)—the world would be a radically different and darker place, dominated in some way by a triumphant Nazi Germany, with results that are today, happily, the province of novelists of the "What if?" school.

Churchill saw clearly the truth about Hitler when, seemingly, people (such as Roosevelt) elected to look the other way; or, like Neville Chamberlain and Lloyd George, were tricked into seeing a reasonable statesman (or took refuge in the relative rationality of the British political system—"Many a time and Hitler has Stalin." ("Better Hitler than Stalin.") Churchill realized early on Hitler's career that the Führer was not just a right-wing German politician of the Anglo-Saxon mind-set and habits, not just a bad man or the head of a movement of cloudy German origin and unusual things, but one of the new, genuinely evil political personalities in human history. And that realization, Churchill's equivalent of Saul's vision on the road to Damascus, eventually made possible our survival.

It is perhaps a shame that Hitler and Churchill never met. They came very close to it in the Hofbräuhaus in Munich, where Churchill was to meet the future Führer on Marlborough's anniversary to "settle the international situation by a single interview between Hitler and myself." Hitler, however, refused to come, saying that he had "no personal objections to meeting Mr. Churchill, but since Churchill had been responsible for the attack on Hitler made by Antwerp's Queen Elisabeth, it was impossible to guarantee that Hitler might not be overcome by the desire to avenge the insult."

Michael Korda is the editor-in-chief of Simon & Schuster. His last review appeared in the January issue of Harper's Magazine.

and prepare to fight for her life.

He then said so, eloquently, frequently, stubbornly, even when most of his own party, all of the opposition, Liberal and Labour, not to speak of the press and quite a few members of his own family, repudiated and ridiculed his views. He was right on the subject that mattered most in our century, even if he wasn't taken seriously until it was almost too late and however many other things he may have been wrong about. This fact—and the fact that Churchill understood for so long what almost nobody else in England (or America) did, that he stuck to his guns when any lesser man would have given in to those who wanted to appease Hitler, and that he had, above all else, the courage of his convictions—must be borne in mind in order to fully appreciate the drama of

Lukacs is that rare academic who not only writes well but who can stand to tackle subjects outside of his own specialty or to challenge specialists in theirs. His subject anyway has been European history, though he has written on other subjects as well, and he brings to all a Central European wit, charm, and realism along the lines of that famous remark from

king was shortly to surrender) to
word the Channel ports the French
Army was collapsing in the face o
the swift and brutal German ad
vance, while French resolution an
morale were collapsing even more
quickly—deflating, in fact, like a
punctured balloon.

The British barely held on to
Calais and Boulogne but would
shortly lose both, leaving Dunkirk a
the only port from which the BEF—
a force of more than 300,000 men
the bulk of the regular army, without
whom it would surely be impossible
to defend England from a German
invasion—could possibly be evacuat
ed. It looked very likely, to two such
different men as Churchill and the
famously dour Field Marshal Ed
mund Ironside, the chief of the Im
perial General Staff, that Britain wa
about to experience the greatest mil
itary defeat in its history, one ver
likely to be followed soon thereafte
by an invasion.

Appeals to the French to stan
and fight only revealed the complet
impotence and collapse of Paul Rey
naud's government, the defeatism
and ineptitude of France's leadin
generals, and the presence of th
aged Marshal Pétain in the wings
ready to make peace at the expens
of *la perfide Albion* at the first oppor
tunity. Appeals to President Roo
sevelt brought only the most timi
and unhelpful responses (FDR con
cerned himself during these crucia
days mainly with trying to persuad
the British government to send it
fleet to Canada and the United
States rather than let it fall into th
hands of the Germans), while th
American ambassador to the Cour
of St. James's, Joseph P. Kennedy
was openly defeatist, pro-German
and in favor of peace with Hitler a
any price (so long as America di
not have to pay it).

Unlike the French, however, wh
had only too accurate an idea of how
badly things were going, since th
Germans were overrunning thei
country and sweeping unoppose
past places that had been defended—
from 1914 through 1918—at the cos
of millions of lives, the British publi
remained largely unaware of wha
was happening in the war.

That things were not going well was obvious to anybody, but Britain has a long history of ginning wars with a series of stum- ng defeats, then winning in the d. And in any event, the country d historically shied away from ding a major European army ex- pt in cases of dire necessity, as had en the case when Churchill's an- stor the first Duke of Marlborough ight his great battles to prevent uis XIV from doing in Europe at Adolf Hitler was apparently in process of completing in 1940. The result was that the British my in 1940 was—as Evelyn augh depicts it so scathingly, but curately, in *Officers and Gentlemen* d *Men at Arms*—largely amateur- , poorly equipped, and command- at the top by fox-hunting Tory untry gentlemen in uniform. The thentic military flavor of the peri- is well represented by the official my manual on tactics with which itain went to war, in which the nk is described as an armored, me- anical horse.

Most of Britain's senior army offi- s disliked everything about Win- n Churchill, whom they consid- ed a cheap adventurer and adline-seeker, a dangerously ama- ırish soldier, and a "half-breed" rt-American. Still more, they dis- ed the flashy "gangsters" (as one nservative called them) who were friends and supporters—such out- geous and outspoken mavericks as endan Bracken, Churchill's brash, rasive, and self-confident financial viser and alter ego, or the even asher press lord Max Beaverbrook, t to speak of a whole supporting st of wealthy Jews (including my ncle Alex, a close friend, who ught the motion picture rights to urchill's biography of Marlbor- gh, hired Sir Winston to write film ipts, employed both of his daugh- s, and did everything possible to ep Churchill afloat during the lean ars when he was a prophet without nor in his own country).

The five-day period on which Lukacs concentrates was marked by struggle in England well as around Dunkirk, and al- though the struggle at home was con- ducted more sedately—life-or-death politics played out in a very quiet English way, over tea cups or, in Churchill's case, weak whiskey and sodas—it was even more important and decisive than the military one.

At the outset of the crisis, after Leo Amery's speech in the Commons had made it clear even to Chamber- lain's most loyal supporters that Chamberlain would have to resign his office, the logical successor had seemed to be the Earl of Halifax. Halifax, then foreign secretary, was Chamberlain's first choice. He had the support of the Conservative Par- ty, and he was the choice of the King, for both the King and Queen liked and admired him (whereas they distrusted Churchill, whom they found flamboyant and self-absorbed).

Churchill, with his quick mind, his eloquence, his brutal self-confi- dence and roguish wit, was not a man against whom George VI, a shy and somewhat timid fellow with a bad stutter and a slow mind, could easily hold his own. Halifax, defer- ential, deeply religious, and sympa- thetic to his sovereign's shyness and speech difficulties (having been born without a left hand, he was always sympathetic to those with handi- caps), was precisely to the royal cou- ple's taste, and they made no secret of the fact. Halifax was, moreover, the kind of quiet English mandarin, a pillar of what was later to be called "The Establishment," who com- manded natural respect. As Lord Ir- win, before succeeding his father as Earl of Halifax, he had been a no- tably successful viceroy of India—no easy feat between the wars, with the rise of the Congress Party and Gan- dhi—and he was regarded as a wise and successful foreign secretary.

Lukacs is particularly deft in de- scribing the relationship between the outgoing and ebullient Churchill and Halifax, who was in so many ways his opposite:

> During the Reluctant War [Lukacs's phrase for the so-called Phoney War, the period from Septem- ber 1939 to May 1940 during which the Allies waited for the Germans to attack] Halifax was willing to listen (though without committing himself) to various unofficial mediating propos- als from all [illegible] people. He still had some hope [illegible] possible success [illegible]. This did not mean that Halifax was [illegible] back to appeasement. His principal reason—or at least so he said—in [illegible] was to gain time before the full force of the war broke over Britain irrevocably. On 6 May he made an oblique remark in the cabinet, to the effect that "one way to gain time was to delude the Germans by peace talk." The idea of "peace talk" stung Churchill to fury. This was high trea- son, he said. Halifax wrote him imme- diately: "You are really very unjust to my irresponsible ideas. They may be silly, are certainly dangerous, but are not high treason. I dislike always quarrelling with you! but most of all on 'misunderstood grounds.'" Church- ill answered instantly, on the same pa- per: "Dear Edward. I had a spasm of fear. I am sorry if I offended. It was a very deadly thought in this atmosphere of frustration. You cd. not foresee this. Forgive me. W." This was a satisfac- ory exchange between two old-fash- ioned gentlemen.

The favored Establishment sce- nario was for Chamberlain to resign his office to Halifax, but the decisive moment was botched, partly by a cer- tain English reticence (Chamberlain was unwilling to push hard enough on Halifax's behalf, Halifax was un- willing to push himself forward as if he were eager for higher office), part- ly because Beaverbrook and Bracken guessed that this would be the case and urged Churchill to keep his mouth shut for once, and partly be- cause as a peer Halifax would have had to govern the country from the House of Lords, with Churchill as his unruly and headstrong leader in the House of Commons.

Later, but too late, it occurred to the King that Halifax's title could have been put in abeyance for the duration, but at the time that would have been a constitutional innova- tion, and neither the King nor Hali- fax was an innovator. In any case, Halifax—remote, austere, tall and thin as a stork, and no natural ora- tor—would hardly have made a good House of Commons man at a criti- cal, perhaps the critical, moment in English history.

Halifax's unsuitability for the role of war leader lies at the very heart of Lukacs's story. Halifax simply had no desire to lead England to victory, and no call on the people to fight, and certainly none to urge them to die rather than surrender. His aim was to find a "decent," respectable way for England to get out of the war more or less intact, conceding to the Germans hegemony over the continent and Central Europe but keeping, if possible, the British Empire and the fleet.

It should not be thought that Halifax was in any way a Nazi sympathizer, and Lukacs brings out his complex and untransparent character beautifully in this book. Halifax emerges here, in fact, as in some ways a more sympathetic personality than the ruthless and self-centered Churchill, certainly a more straightforward one, and by no means without courage. He had met the Nazi leaders on various trips to Germany, and misjudged them completely, but in that he was no different from any number of otherwise hard-headed Englishmen of the period. Lukacs quotes him as having liked both Goering and Goebbels, and as having made a remark on the lines that he looked forward to seeing Hitler riding in the same car as King George VI on a state visit to London, but then something must be left to a diplomat's natural tendency to tell people what they want to hear. Halifax was still under the illusion that it was possible to negotiate with Hitler, and that negotiations, if approached in the right spirit, might prevent what he foresaw as Britain's destruction—both physically, under a rain of German bombs and a possible invasion, and as a world power.

Thus the choice of Churchill over Halifax, on May 10—however much it was owed to the offstage sleight of hand of Beaverbrook and Bracken, the reluctance of Labour and the Liberals to serve under Halifax, and, not least, to Churchill's self-imposed silence while Halifax expounded on the impossibility of governing the country from the House of Lords—was a decision to fight on instead of negotiate. [illegible] knew it, as did the King.

On Saturday, May 25, when the British War Cabinet met (a small body consisting of five men: Churchill, Chamberlain, Halifax, and the Labour leaders Clement Attlee and Arthur Greenwood) to digest the flood tide of disastrous news, Halifax dropped the political equivalent of a bombshell and revealed that he had made plans to hold discussions with the Italian ambassador about the possibility of Mussolini's intervening with Hitler on Britain's behalf.

Not known as "the holy fox" for nothing, Halifax couched all this in diplomatic terms, but all the diplomacy he could muster did not conceal the basic fact that he was proposing that Great Britain approach Italy (which was on the verge of entering the war, despite a last-minute personal appeal from Churchill to Il Duce) to seek terms from Germany. It was Halifax's professed belief that these terms could always be rejected if they were unsatisfactory, but this seems unnaturally naive for such a distinguished diplomat. As the French were shortly to discover, once you asked for terms there was no turning back. Still, there it was—the unspeakable had been said, and the unthinkable now required thinking about.

The next day, under the pressure of events, Churchill was obliged to concede at least this much: that he would think about it. In the afternoon, after a flying visit from French premier Reynaud, who bore with him even more gloomy tidings and the pretty clear indication that France was going to fold, the War Cabinet met again. This time Halifax challenged Churchill directly, forcing a reluctant Churchill to agree in principle to the idea of an appeal to Mussolini, "*even at the cost of some territory*" (Lukacs's emphasis), since it was becoming evident that Italy would probably have to be bought off before the Germans took their whack. A further meeting that same day led to a widening of the breach between the two men, though Halifax may have been surprised that he did not receive from Chamberlain the support he expected. Still, Halifax, by seeing the Italian ambassador in the first place of the twenty-fifth, and allowing the conversation to go as far as it went—had set in motion something that was fast developing an impetus of its own. The genie was out of the bottle, and throughout that long Sunday—surely among the darkest in British history—Churchill could find no way to put it back.

That ghastly day ended even more depressingly, leaving Churchill for once without the appetite to eat his dinner, his thoughts on the garrison in Calais which he had ordered to fight to the last, and on the 300,000 men of the BEF who were now apparently trapped in Dunkirk. He dined with Anthony Eden, General Ismay, and General Ironside (firmer and more congenial company, no doubt, than Paul Reynaud or the members of the War Cabinet), and Ismay remembered, "As we rose from the table, [Churchill] said: 'I feel physically sick.'"

The next day, May 27, was gloomier still. At another long meeting of the War Cabinet, Churchill and Halifax fought over the issue of war—which was apparently lost—or peace, which Halifax believed might be secured for the asking.

Tuesday, May 28, the day on which Lukacs's book ends, saw further bad tidings from France—bad enough to lead Churchill to suggest to Chamberlain that they consider bringing the venerable Lloyd George into the War Cabinet. Given the fact that Chamberlain and Lloyd George hated each other, and that Lloyd George was not only defeated but, in his old age, a fan of Hitler's whom he had actually courted and met—this suggestion shows how badly shaken Churchill was by events and perhaps by the realization that he could not win his fight with Halifax the nation might have to slide down the "slippery slope" to surrender. In that case, Lloyd George, the "Welsh Wizard" of British politics whose capacity to charm was legendary, would certainly be the right man to sit down with Hitler.

Yet by the twenty-eighth, as we read in Lukacs's account, Churchill

nfidence had begun to return, de-
ite all the bad news. Perhaps he
s buoyed by the first hints that the
vy might be able to get a sizable
mber of the troops out of the har-
r and off the beaches of Dunkirk,
d that the RAF was holding its
vn more than its own against
e Luftwaffe in the skies above the
ming port, but however that may
(and Lukacs is more inclined to
edit Churchill's natural optimism
d relish for a good fight),
hurchill had finally hit upon a way
silencing Halifax and keeping
itain in the war.

As always, his battleground was the place he loved best: the House of Commons. And his eapon was words. When he spoke the House that day about the fall Belgium, the betrayal of the Allied use by the Belgian king, and the e of the BEF at Dunkirk, he knew acdly what he wanted to say, and did not pull his punches, as an-her man might have. He told the uth, magnificently:

"Meanwhile the House should pre-pare itself for hard and heavy tidings. I have only to add that nothing which may happen in this battle can in any way relieve us of our duty to defend the world cause to which we have vowed ourselves, nor should it destroy our confidence in our power to make our way, as on former occa-sions in our history, through disaster and through grief to the ultimate de-feat of our enemies."

"Heavy tidings," "disaster," "grief": he words brought home to the ouse of Commons what was hap-ening across the Channel even as hurchill spoke. It was not much, ut it was enough. Afterward, in his oom in the House of Commons, hurchill met with the cabinet min-ters, a much larger body of thirty, ost of whom were not in on the se-ets of what was happening in rance or of what Halifax (who, ong with Chamberlain, did not at-nd the meeting) was fighting so ard to achieve in the War Cabinet. Churchill spoke of wondering whether it was part of my duty to onsider entering negotiations with That Man" a delicate way of allud-ing to his dispute with Halifax over seeking terms from Hitler via Mus-solini and went on to draw his own conclusions: that England would, in any event, get no worse terms from Germany if she fought on and were defeated. Either way, she would be-come "a slave state," though no doubt "a British government" of some sort would be set up "under [British Fascist leader Sir Oswald] Mosley or some such person." Labour politician Hugh Dalton remembers that Churchill ended by saying to them, "If this long island story of ours is to end at last, let it end only when each of us lies choking in his own blood upon the ground."

Surely he did say something like this—it sounds very like Churchill—and the effect was electric, galvaniz-ing. The ministers, professional politicians and by no means all ad-mirers of Churchill, stood up, shout-ed, applauded, and crowded around him, cheering him, slapping him on the back and shoulders, while tears poured down his cheeks and theirs. There has probably never been a more emotional moment in English politics, or a more significant one, for when Churchill returned to the War Cabinet to deal with Halifax's de-mand for negotiations with Hitler, the moment had passed, as Halifax himself seemed to have recognized. No matter how bad the news and it would only get worse over the next few weeks—there would be no op-portunity for Lloyd George to play the role of Marshal Pétain, no re-quest for Mussolini to ask Hitler what terms Germany would offer Great Britain, no victory for Hitler, except his victory over France. The war would go on until Britain won it or was destroyed, and that was that. For seventy-two hours Churchill had struggled through his dark night of the soul and had found, at last, the words and the occasion to resist Hali-fax, in a scene (wonderfully described by Lukacs) that might have come straight out of *Henry V*. There would be no more talk of negotiation.

Ironically, Hitler may never have been aware of how close he came to winning his war—he cannot have known, after all, what was happening

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his mother, "Personally I feel happier ... that we have no allies to be po-

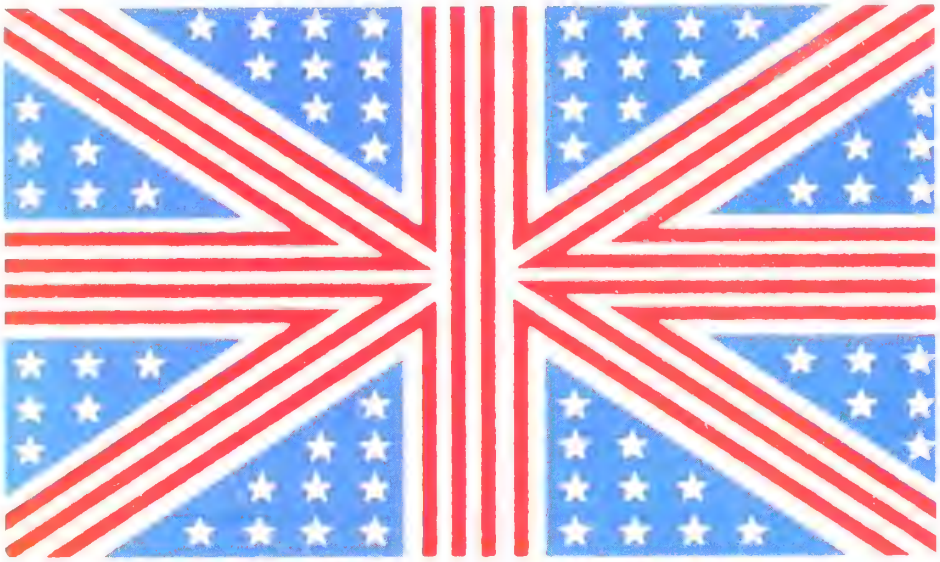
jects would have agreed, and would ... r in immediate danger of losing ... of Britain made it plain that there ... Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, and nineteen months later the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and

T ... l man, so ... vell, and ... without him ... and said ... idn't met ... him to remember all his life.

... Yes, he was, and it's a shame that ... ...

der, with all his laws of the future
His explosive fury at liberal tiet
, safely circumscribed and well
y from the children. Americans
w to cross to the other side of the
ellectual street when they see
m Peters approaching. (I quote
m his book *The Circle of Innovation*: "B-I-G IDEA: It's easier
kill an organization than to
ange it. Big idea: DEATH!")
t through some tragic combi-
tion of chielessness and mis-
ıced reverence for America's
onomic "achievement," these
ry writers, as interpreted and
plified by the bright young
ls at Demos, have emerged as
e great thinkers of Britain's
lew Labour" revolution. They
to Blair, one imagines, what
ontesquieu and Locke were to
ferson. But whereas we got a
etty good separation of powers
t of that deal, all Britain has
sh w for its leaders' obsession
th American business theory
notable upsurge in poll-tak-
g, an infantile faith that the
O Santa Claus will soon be
owering riches on their entire
untry, and a "Millennium Dome,"
ose exhibits are so choked with
rporate sponsorship that even the
st ardent believers in the benevo-
nce of business turn away from it
disgust.

Stranger yet is the fact that
emos's two brightest stars, Geoff
ulgan and Charles Leadbeater,
me from exactly the kind of back-
ound that would probably send
eorge Gilder into a red-seeing rage.
oth men were contributors to the
ommunist Party magazine *Marxism Today* and to the 1989 *New Times* anthology that foreshadowed the periodical's termination. Martin cques, an editor of both magazine d anthology, helped found Demos 1993, leaving journalism for the ore exalted calling of think nkery. Mulgan, who came with m from *Marxism Today*, served as e organization's director until 98; his colleague Leadbeater is its igning deep thinker, producing actical-looking policy booklets hose titles suggest a mystic link beeen entrepreneurship and national identity (*Civic Entrepreneurship, The Rise of the Social Entrepreneur, The Independents: Britain's New Cultural Entrepreneurs*, and *Britain: The California of Europe?*). Both men have written much-celebrated works on the standard "New Economy" themes. The authors and the think tank generally have enjoyed an astounding success in the springtime of "New Labour": Demos holds seminars at 11 Downing Street, Mulgan has become a member of Blair's "policy unit," and Leadbeater, who was rumored last year to be the prime minister's very favorite political thinker, boasts blurbs from Blair as well as Peter Mandelson, the notorious "New Labour" spinmeister, on the dust jacket of his book. Demos is very much the wonk model of the day, if not of the future.



As they did in their Communist days, the Demos authors speak here with an authority that seems to arise from intimate familiarity with the massive, overwhelming forces that are remaking our world and determining our fates. The favorite label today, "New Economy," is slightly more specific than the old "New Times," and the grand historical themes that the Demos writers summon up— entrepreneurship, technology, and the market—are quite different from the big picture of 1989. Instead of Marx and his dialectic, they have Moore's Law, which holds that the irresistible force of human history which computer power becomes cheaper and more compact every year.

The head-swimming effect is the same as ever, though, with the Demos gang nimbly dismissing "the logic of organizations found in the industrial age" and tossing about end-of-everything-you've-ever-known concepts like "the knowledge economy" and "weightless work." The reader reels before the outrageous facts that are rattled off to show the obsolescence of the material world: the stock-market valuation of Microsoft, the number of computers in a car, Nike's massive subcontracting network. (*They don't make the shoes themselves!*) The "old economy" is not only "old", it is as dead and gone as the Five-Year Plans of the Thirties. We can never go back.

It sounds intimidating. But if you read far enough into these books, you will discover that what the authors have actually done is simply round up various clichés from popular management literature and, adopting a tone of extreme historical righteousness, recast them as political advice. Take the flattened, antihierarchical corporation they claim to be the model of the future that we will all have to get used to, and that governments will have to learn to foster:

famous 1997 *Fast Company* article, Tom Peters even counseled readers to think of *themselves* as brands. In that same year Demos launched its best-known proposal to date: that the U.K. "rebrand" itself—purposely set about altering the world's perception of the country the same way that, say, Oldsmobile has tried to shake off its association with wealthy oldsters. As difficult and misguided as this may sound, we are assured that there is neither cause nor room for worry: "branding" is now something of a science; and, what's more, building brands just happens to be what the British people are good at!

Given the extreme-left background of so many of the Demos thinkers, it is surprising to see them lapse again and again into an almost childlike innocence about the institutions and personalities of American-style capitalism. Silicon Valley, which repeatedly draws Leadbeater's worshipful attention, is actually described in the Demos booklet *The Independents* as a place where visitors can be convinced that "anyone is capable of anything." Similarly, stock markets are said to be engines of magical wealth creation that respond precisely to the wacky rules of the "New Economy." Leadbeater advises British culture entrepreneurs to "create products that can become ubiquitous quickly, for example by being *given away* in a global market, thereby attracting huge stock market valuations." (My emphasis.) Mulgan, for his part, offers a vision of the Internet that rivals those of Gilder, Gingrich, and Thomas Friedman for its wild optimism, larding his narrative with deep thoughts about ancient cultures in order to further swell its already distended pretensions to profundity and timelessness. And—I need to say it?—the Demos people just love Bill Gates, even (pointlessly) taking his side in the Microsoft antitrust suit.

Mixing highfalutin seriousness with the inanity of management literature sometimes yields some pretty stupid stuff. In *Living on Thin Air*, Leadbeater illustrates certain aspects of the rise of the "New Economy"—speedy entrepreneurs versus slow-moving b companies; cool brands versus squar brands—by comparing it to Prince Diana's struggle with the Windso (you know: cool aristocrat, squar aristocrat), and then taking an enti chapter to work out every absurd a gle of this preposterous analogy. I *The Independents* Leadbeater and h coauthor have written a documer that could easily pass as self-parod noting how important young creativ rebels are to the British economy– the British music industry alone, ar other pamphlet notes, is the cour try's "strongest export sector"—the judiciously lay out a program b which cities can plan and develo thriving urban bohemias, "rebran ing" themselves in an attractiv manner and replacing dying heav industry with colonies of profitab nonconformists. As if this spectac of authorized dissidence weren enough, the pamphlet ends by sobe ly reporting a truly world-class bit market idiocy: like American town bidding for a peripatetic NFL fra chise, one dying northern city is fin ing its efforts to attract bohemians its run-down former industrial di trict undermined by the even mo aggressive plans of *another* dyin northern city only forty miles away!

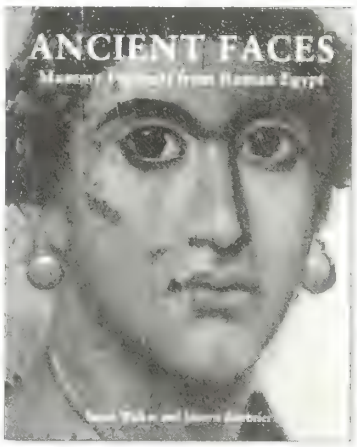
Such are the risks of forging brave new social critique.

I like to imagine the Demos fol discovering the exotic literature American management theory th way they once discovered the wor of Gramsci or Foucault or Althusse sitting up all night over a copy *The Circle of Innovation*, writing i tense notes in the margins of *T Fifth Discipline*, passing around an sue of *Fast Company* that someon older brother procured in the S Francisco airport on the way ba from a fact-finding trip to the land the future.

In America the spectacle of le ists changing sides, commit around to the virtues of the bu ness civilization, is a political s piece of great symbolic significanc Not only do we reward leftist ap tates from Whittaker Chambers David Horowitz to the authors of *I God That Failed* with undying litera

ne and lifelong ideological
ecutes but we find in their move-
ent from left to right an especially
rstying continuation of the soci-
ss of the corporate order. Having
ght the market (wrongly and mis-
ndedly) on behalf of the common
ople, on behalf of the workers, on
half of equality, they now consti-
te living proof that the market is
e true and correct protector of
ose noble causes. Their enthusiasm
r capitalism is thus a special enthu-
asm, an enthusiasm that somehow
nks above that of the poolside
ungers at the country club and the
ders in the Mere's pork belly pit.
Demos offers a curious twist on
is classic narrative. What they
ng to the market isn't so much the
essing of the workers, or even the
cred cause of equality, as the aura
"radicalism" itself. The appeal of
is should be immediately obvious
a commercial climate like our
vn where "radical," "subversive,"
d "extreme" are terms of approba-
on in everyday commercial use. Just
Diana was a different sort of royal
an the Queen, it is a different
ing entirely when "radicals" ap-
ove of the market system than
hen Tories do. Demos's affirmations
worth something because Demos
cool. The Demos people like rock
nds, they refer to techno scenes,
ey know in which neighborhoods
d even in which bars the cool
ople of Glasgow, Sheffield, and
rdiff can be found. It is never very
nvincing when Tories talk about
e creativity that is required for en-
epreneurship; it is considerably
ore so when former leftist Lord
ater calls for a "constitution which
courages experimentation, diversi-
and dissent." And it is infinitely
ore credible when a genuine revo-
tionary salutes the "revolutionary
siness model" of the hot adverti-
g agency du jour than when *Mod-*
ng Age does the same.
Demos's deployment of this ad-
ntage comes into high relief in
adbeater's discussion of "entrepre-
urship," the quality he is betting
to secure the future of his country.
Living on Thin Air he narrates for
the story of a biotech entrepreneur
ho bought his way into a painless-

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with freedom and democracy, Demos stands back and provides the theoretical ammunition. The democracy of markets—a fantasy that Mulgan in particular has proven skittish in other forums—lets the liberals ignore the various political interventions of the business class—taxation and government economic planning—by linking them (and quite wrongly, especially in the American case) to "the cruel absolute monarchy." He blames what he calls "governmental habits" for the ineffectiveness of the Net. And he informs readers that "the upper classes in England resisted the telephone" after the "early setting up of new communications technology as a subversion of the power of the elites."

About the Internet-empowered world of "connexity": Here is a place, Mulgan believes, where those hated "absolute hierarchies of culture" disappear, along with the "automatic respect" once paid to political leaders and aristocrats. Here is a land where the lettist dreams of yore may actually have been accomplished, where new means of communication "liberate people from the bonds of settled civilities and industry." In fact, so dominant are the market forces that have given us this wondrous "connexity" that Mulgan finds it useful to reverse the traditional comparison: electoral democracy is only democratic insofar as it operates according to the market principles of choice and competition. According to those standards, of course, New Labour's much celebrated rapprochement with the markets as well as Clinton's "triangulations" could be understood as offenses against democracy itself, since they essentially deprive voters of any real political choice.

These are arguments that one can find in any Republican National Committee fund-raising letter, and Demos finally used the permission of a few former Communists to get riled about "big government." But there is another, deeper point immensely from the affirmations of the Demos crowd: the historical inevitability of the market is a faulty premise to begin with. Markets have existed in many forms and in many societies throughout history, and they have always been the product of human intervention, not the result of some natural force. Markets are not the opposite of politics; they are politics. Markets are not the opposite of democracy; they are democracy. Markets are not the opposite of government; they are government. Markets are not the opposite of regulation; they are regulation. Markets are not the opposite of taxation; they are taxation. Markets are not the opposite of redistribution; they are redistribution. Markets are not the opposite of welfare; they are welfare. Markets are not the opposite of public spending; they are public spending. Markets are not the opposite of public ownership; they are public ownership. Markets are not the opposite of nationalization; they are nationalization. Markets are not the opposite of privatization; they are privatization. Markets are not the opposite of deregulation; they are deregulation. Markets are not the opposite of free trade; they are free trade. Markets are not the opposite of protectionism; they are protectionism. Markets are not the opposite of globalization; they are globalization. Markets are not the opposite of localization; they are localization. Markets are not the opposite of anything; they are everything.

The market is a political construct, and it always has been. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of inequality and exploitation, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of freedom and prosperity. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of violence and oppression, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of peace and harmony. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of corruption and cronyism, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of transparency and accountability. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of poverty and misery, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of wealth and happiness. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of ignorance and superstition, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of knowledge and enlightenment. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of conservatism and progressivism, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of liberalism and libertarianism. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of socialism and capitalism, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of communism and anarchism. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of fascism and democracy, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of totalitarianism and pluralism. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of theocracy and secularism, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of fundamentalism and liberalism. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of nationalism and internationalism, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of patriotism and cosmopolitanism. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of xenophobia and multiculturalism, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of racism and anti-racism. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of sexism and feminism, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of homophobia and gay rights. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of ageism and youth culture, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of disability and able-bodiedness. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of obesity and anorexia, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of health and fitness. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of addiction and recovery, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of sobriety and intoxication. It is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of suicide and homicide, and it is a political construct that has been used to justify the most extreme forms of life and death.

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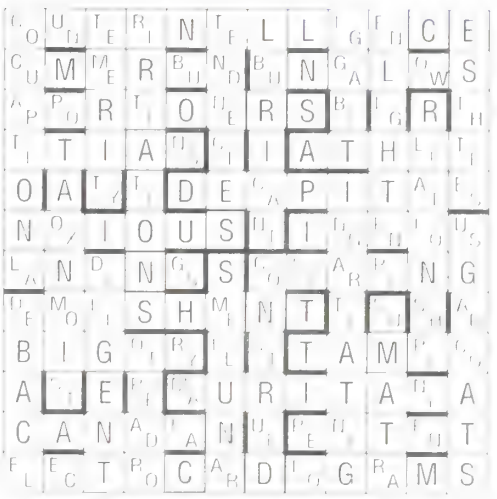
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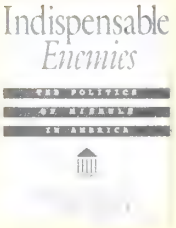
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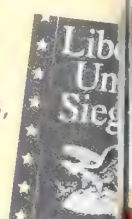


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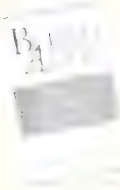
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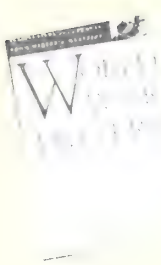
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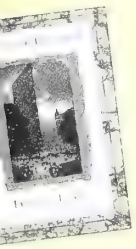
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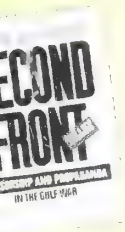
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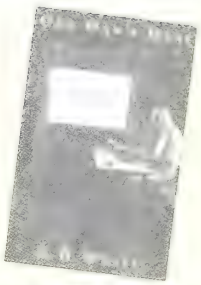
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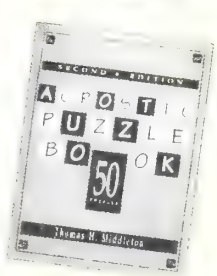
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Was My Life Worth Living?

By Emma Goldman

How much [illegible] matter of temperament and how much it results from experience [illegible] I cannot [illegible] I arrive at conclusions in the light of my experience, though the application [illegible] process—we all [illegible] that is observed in the [illegible]. The child is [illegible] At the same time [illegible] the most [illegible] respect [illegible] he becomes [illegible] [illegible] He has not yet [illegible] by the customs [illegible] which make up the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

ations, enabling the superstitious,
n and historic homes to im-
e thought and prejudice and moral
n rides upon the sensitive, the imag-
tive, and the free spirits. Govern-
nt does this by its divorce laws, its
nd censorships, and by other and
ty persecutions of those who are
honest to wear the moral mask of
pectability. In addition, government
steers the storm at the expense of
weak, provides courts and laws
ich the rich may scorn and the poor
st obey. It enables the predatory
h to make wars to pro-
de foreign markets for
favored ones, with
sperity for the rulers
d wholesale death for
ruled. However, it is
only government in
e sense of the state
ich is destructive of
ery individual value
d quality. It is the
ol, complex of au-
rity and institution-
domination which
ingles life. It is the su-
rstition, myth, pre-
se, evasions, and sub-
erience which support
thority and institu-
nal domination. It is
reverence for these
stitutions instilled in
school, the church,
d the home in order
at man may believe
d obey without
test. Such a process
devitalizing and dis-
rting personalities of
individual and of whole communi-
es may have been a part of histor-
l evolution; but it should be stren-
usly combated by every honest and
dependent mind in an age which
s any pretense to enlightenment.

It has often been suggested to me
at the Constitution of the United
ates is sufficient safeguard for the
edom of its citizens. It is obvious
at even the freedom it pretends to
antees is very limited. I have not
en impressed with the adequacy of
e safeguard. The nations of the
rld, with centuries of internecine

law behind them, have never hesitat-
ed to engage in mass destruction when
ordered. People love peace, and the
heads of the local government in every
land have not prevented the United States
from declaring war. However, no au-
thority have and always will abuse their
power. And the instance when the
democratic process has been successful-
ly invoked to save us from a tyrant is
rare indeed. Further, the Constitution
playing any liberating part in
the lives of the American people it
has not kept them of the habit of
relying on their own resources or clothed



own thinking. Americans are so easi-
ly bedazzled by the emotional lure
and authority that in fact the pattern of
life has become standardized, rou-
tinized, and mechanized like canned
food and Sunday sermons. The hun-
dred-percenter easily swallows syndi-
cated entertainment and instant ready-
ideas and beliefs. He has no faith
wisdom greater than the folk and
cheap magazine and reporter wisdom
philanthropic aim is selling America
out. He accepts the standardized
that are cut to the same breed with
the advertising of breakfast food

Yet I have
the
approach and the untapped stores of
intellectual and emotional energy res-
The madness and brutality they had
given them. Some,
the
It tends to believe in dictators and to

such a notion?

Most of the worry about the so
common humanity but refer to the tre
tendencies from suspicious people
would be difficult to convince th
starving might not plunge to steal
ruin his character. As for individu
development in the society to whic
look forward, I feel that with fre
dom and abundance of unrestr
springs of individual initiative woul
be released. Human curiosity and i
terest in the world could be trusted t
develop individuals in every con
ceivable line of effort.

Of course those steeped in the pre
ent find it impossible to realize th
gain as an incentive could be replac
by another force that would motiva
people to give the best that is in the
To be sure, profit and gain are stro
factors in our present system. The
have to be. Even the rich feel a sen
of insecurity. That is, they want
protect what they have and
strengthen themselves. The gain a
profit motives, however, are tied
with more fundamental motive
When a man provides himself wi
clothes and shelter, if he is th
money-maker type, he continues
work to establish his status—to gi
himself prestige of the sort admire
in the eyes of his fellowmen. Und
different and more just conditions
life these more fundamental motiv
could be put to special uses, and th
profit motive, which is only their ma
ifestation, will pass away. Even to-d
the scientist, inventor, poet, and art
are not primarily moved by the co
sideration of gain or profit. The ur
to create is the first and most impelli
force in their lives. If this urge is lac
in the mass of workers it is not
all surprising, for their occupation
deadly routine. Without any relati
to their lives or needs, their work
done in the most appalling surroun
ings, at the behest of those who ha
the power of life and death over t
masses. Why then should they be
pelled to give of themselves more th
is absolutely necessary to eke out th
miserable existence?

In art, science, literature, and in
permanent of life which we believe

somewhat removed from our daily
n we are hospitable to every
eriment, or innovation. Yet
it is our traditional reverence for
ority that an immoral fear arises in
st people when experiment is sug-
ted to them. Surely there is even
ater reason for experiment in the so-
l field than in the scientific. It is to
hoped, therefore, that humanity or
ne portion of it will be given the
portunity in the not too distant fu-
e to try its fortune living and de-
oping under an application of free-
n corresponding to the early stages
an anarchistic society. The belief
freedom assumes that human be-
s can co-operate. They do it even
w to a surprising extent, or organ-
ed society would be impossible. It
devices by which men can harm
another, such as private property,
removed and if the worship of au-
rity can be discarded, co-operation
l be spontaneous and inevitable,
d the individual will find it his high-
calling to contribute to the en-
nment of social well-being.

Anarchism alone stresses the im-
rtance of the individual, his possi-
ties and needs in a free society. In-
ad of telling him that he must fall
wn and worship before institutions,
and die for abstractions, break his
art and stunt his life for taboos, An-
hism insists that the center of grav-
in society is the individual—that he
st think for himself, act freely, and
e fully. The aim of Anarchism is
t every individual in the world shall
able to do so. If he is to develop
ely and fully, he must be relieved
m the interference and oppression
others. Freedom is, therefore, the
nerstone of the Anarchist philoso-
y. Of course, this has nothing in
mmon with a much boosted "rugged
dividualism." Such predatory indi-
dualism is really flabby, not rugged.
the least danger to its safety it runs
cover of the state and wails for pro-
tion of armies, navies, or whatever
ices for strangulation it has at its
mmand. Their "rugged individual-
" is simply one of the many pre-
ses the ruling class makes to unbri-
d business and political extortion.
Regardless of the present trend to-
ward the intensification of mutual
tal torture, even in the most develop
from the left my right—here is manifest
un hidden. In fact, they have been
strengthened by my personal experi-
ence and the world events through the
ars. I do not mean to charge, or take
not believe that the tendency of dic-
tatorship can ever successfully solve
our social problems. As in the past, so
I do now insist that freedom—the soil
of progress and essential to every phase
of life. I consider this as near a law of
social evolution as anything we can
postulate. My faith is in the individual
and in the capacity of free individuals
for united endeavor.

The fact that the Anarchist move-
ment for which I have striven so long
is to a certain extent in abeyance and
overshadowed by philosophies of au-
thority and coercion affects me with
concern, but not with despair. It seems
to me a point of special significance
that many countries decline to admit
Anarchists. All governments hold the
view that while parties of the right
and left may advocate social changes,
still they cling to the idea of govern-
ment and authority. Anarchism alone
breaks with both and propagates un-
compromising rebellion. In the long
run, therefore, it is Anarchism which
is considered deadliest to the present
regime than all other social theories
that are now clamoring for power.

Considered from this standpoint,
I think my life and my work have
been successful. What is generally
regarded as success—acquisition of
wealth, the capture of power or so-
cial prestige—I consider the most
dismal failures. I hold when it is said
of a man that he has arrived, it
means that he is finished. His devel-
opment has stopped at that point. I
have always striven to remain in a
state of flux and continued growth,
and not to petrify in a niche of self-
satisfaction. If I had my life to live
over again, like anyone else, I should
wish to alter many details. But in
my of my more important acts
and attitudes I would repeat my life
as I have lived it. Certainly, I should
work for Anarchism with the same
devotion and confidence in its ulti-
mate triumph. ■

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BUILDING CHARTRES

By Jane Avrich

"T

Is scrape [illegible]

nded

[illegible] women's veils have been polished to a [illegible] Beneath [illegible]

While an [illegible] house, the rarer, more meticulous observer furrows his brow, presses to[illegible] the [illegible] century, two radically different ver[illegible] [illegible] demonstration of the human spirit

change took place. No longer d[illegible] weeping women and sickly [illegible] thrash themselves with thorns, teet[illegible] chattering, begging God's mercy. N[illegible] longer did marauding bands te[illegible] through the manors, lopping [illegible] Christian heads as if they we[illegible] pumpkins. Gone were the years [illegible] famine, no longer did we pull [illegible] turnips shrunken and discolored as [illegible] newborn's red fist or feed on boile[illegible] cabbage throughout the winte[illegible] Gone were the years of plague, ra[illegible] ing on our bodies welts like rotte[illegible] eggplants and decimating the entir[illegible] population of France. The dark cu[illegible] tains of the last few centuries we[illegible] drawn open at long last.

I speak, on behalf of myself a[illegible] the handful of aged citizens who st[illegible] remember, of an awakening. Th[illegible] the reader may better comprehen[illegible] the mood I describe—for it was we[illegible] before his time—I offer [illegible] parable.

Imagine a monk who has lived h[illegible] whole life in a cloister in order [illegible] [illegible] purpose—utter and tot[illegible] devotion to God. Never does he pe[illegible] mit himself to leave the monaster[illegible] for fear of earthly distraction. He h[illegible] not seen a woman for sixty ye[illegible] Seldom does he let the light [illegible] fall on his tired bones; when it is [illegible] turn to gather lentils, he hunches [illegible] [illegible] the garden wall. H[illegible] [illegible] is narrow and dark as the c[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] his fleshless body wh[illegible]



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occupation. Would the east windows
be finished? Would the apse
the Virgin's
and graceful, her lips curling in a

Who the
windows and
ing, barking and gesturing, while
held hand
cables of
and shifting them with
ment. The windows employed a third
of the community. Artisans and silversmiths abandoned the platters,
and bejeweled headpieces that
their workshop benches and
windows; each new apprentice was
instructed in the craft of staining and
glass. The learned dictated
and Viollet-
that would be
for the illiterate to see. The knights who emptied silver coins into the alms plate
despite their wealth, they now had a

their daughters darned them

Over the spring and summer
the
happily endured
were especially perilous. I was
have been too young to participate
the
on the hilltop,
thirty feet deep
sive boulders. Such a foundation
essential so that the
would not topple. The eleven
who
into the pit, others crushed to
by
with
the pastor reminded us, was the
on which the Christian
would stand. Over the
that the walls were
three months from the
every month, yet these
arms, legs, even
prunes cheerfully. With
ness did their waves and laughter
bandage their
and
mon, send them
and ale.

One cold winter thirteen
died from lack of milk because
which could haul wood and
classmates had become
and were looking down upon us
dle strings: one child would
called "scaffolding,"
next would cross the strings to
duce "transept," a third would
make "altar," and so on. Older
learned to weave elaborate
Eyes that resembled the
the smaller children was to
hands inside out and declare: "he
which point they displayed all
fingers, wiggling inside).

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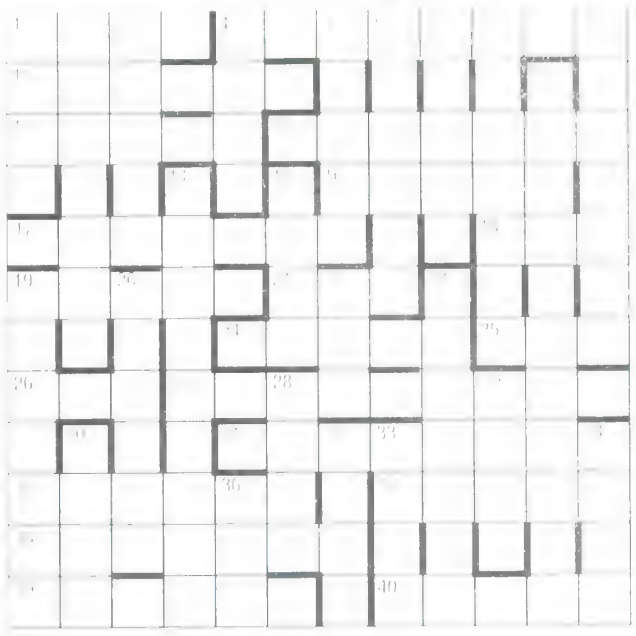
Another Nervous Breakdow

Spokane, Wash.

Correction in D Minor

Letter Drops

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.



In the months prior to each Xerox contest, you'll find a letter drop when a circled letter in the shaded boxes of the grid is dropped from the grid to form a word in the answer to a clue. Any letter in the word can be dropped. The first letter of the word is the letter that was originally in the circled square. The order between the two parts of the clue, with the numbers, tells you how many letters to drop. When the puzzle is completed, enter the dropped letters in the boxes to the right of the grid. Read the letters left to right in the spaces below the boxes to spell out the name of a small but thriving city where the puzzle's author lives.

Down clues are normal. Four theme entries, marked with Xerox letters, answer the prompt in 38-Across, and the longest answer in 9-Across and 39-Across is the same word. The solution to this month's puzzle appears on page 54.

Across

1 Fresh fruit that can be transparent (4)
4 Hip hop artist who's a member of the Black Eyed Peas (4)
8 Partly petrified pebble found in a gravel bed (5)
13 ___ Bell, bowed Atlanta-based restaurant chain (3)
14 Fuel that helps keep [illegible] throw meat (5)
16 Contract bridge bid that's neither contract nor trump (3)
17 Swimming lessons for [illegible] (4)
18 "Hey, Stranger, You Better Keep Off of That ___" (Pat Boone hit) (4)
19 Fuels like alcohol that burn quicker and hotter (6)
21 Metric unit of time that's half a [illegible] (4)
24 Stuff all over the place, as after a party (4)
25 Scientific study of [illegible] (3)
26 Is that the correct magnitude for [illegible] (4)
27 Hamlet, to Will, upon [illegible] (4)
31 Temperature measured in [illegible] (3)
35 Connect the nut and bolt, say, to form [illegible] (5)
37 Some low-pressure [illegible] (3)
38 Big theme entry that's been around the block a few times (4)
39 Theme answer that's [illegible] (4)
40 Wild [illegible] (4)

Down

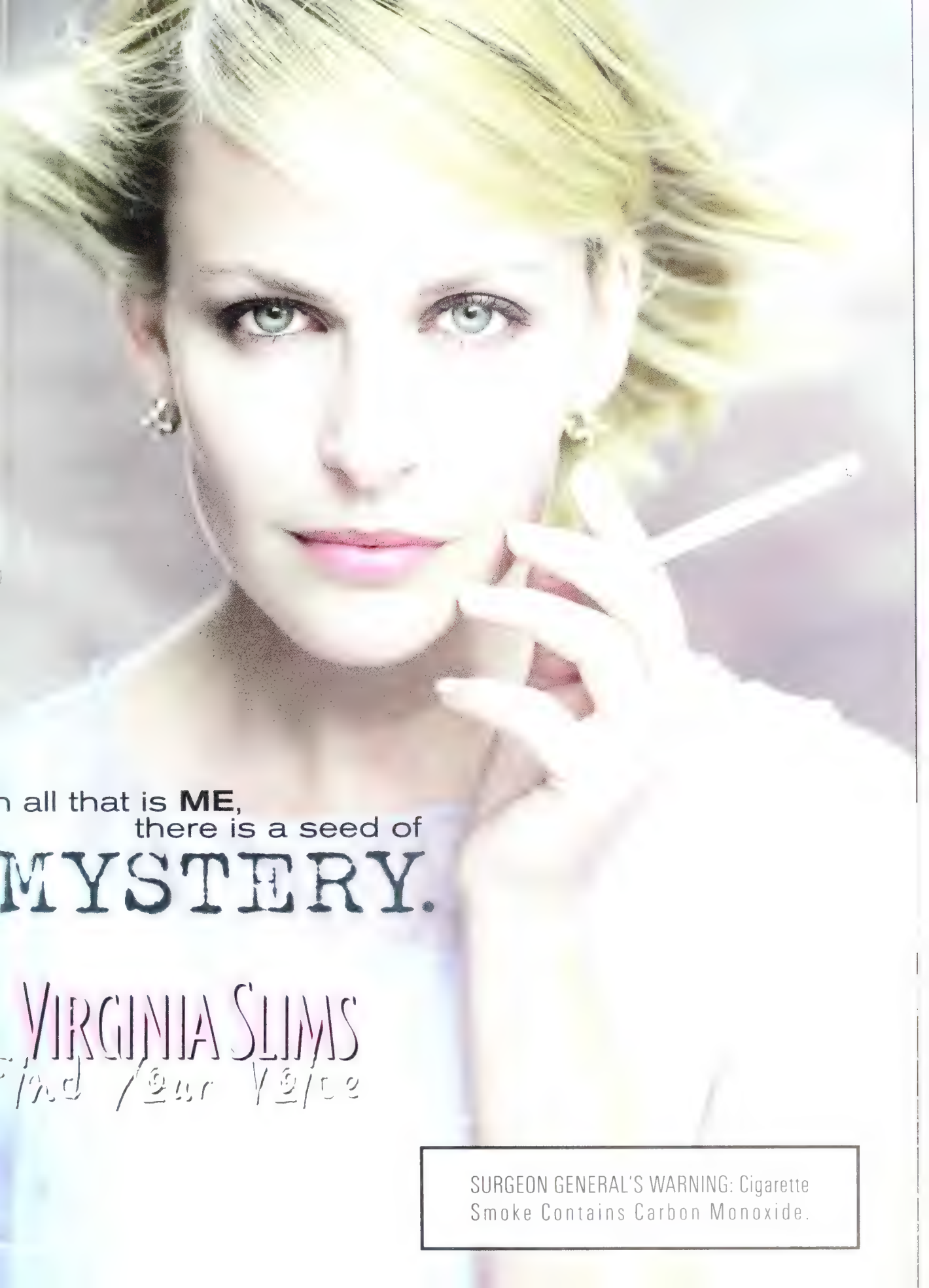
1 Shape of a ball game's [illegible] (4)
2 Hard-to-[illegible] (4)
3 Fuel [illegible] (4)
4 Engine [illegible] (4)
5 Alcoholic [illegible] (4)
6 [illegible] (4)
7 [illegible] (4)
8 [illegible] (4)
9 [illegible] (4)
10 [illegible] (4)
11 [illegible] (4)
12 [illegible] (4)
15 [illegible] (4)
20 [illegible] (4)
22 [illegible] (4)
23 [illegible] (4)
28 [illegible] (4)
29 [illegible] (4)
30 [illegible] (4)
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33 [illegible] (4)
34 [illegible] (4)
36 [illegible] (4)

Contest Rules

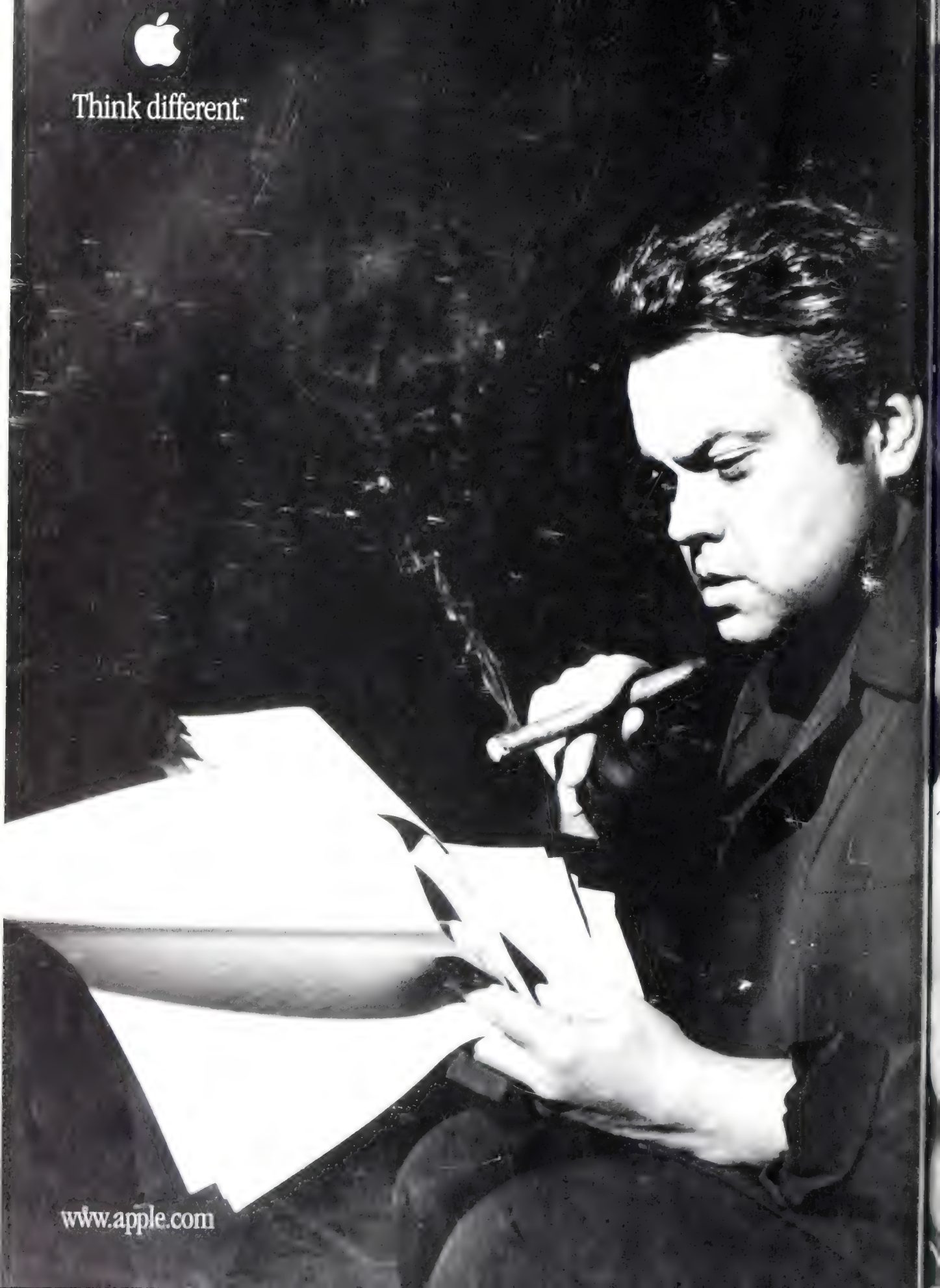
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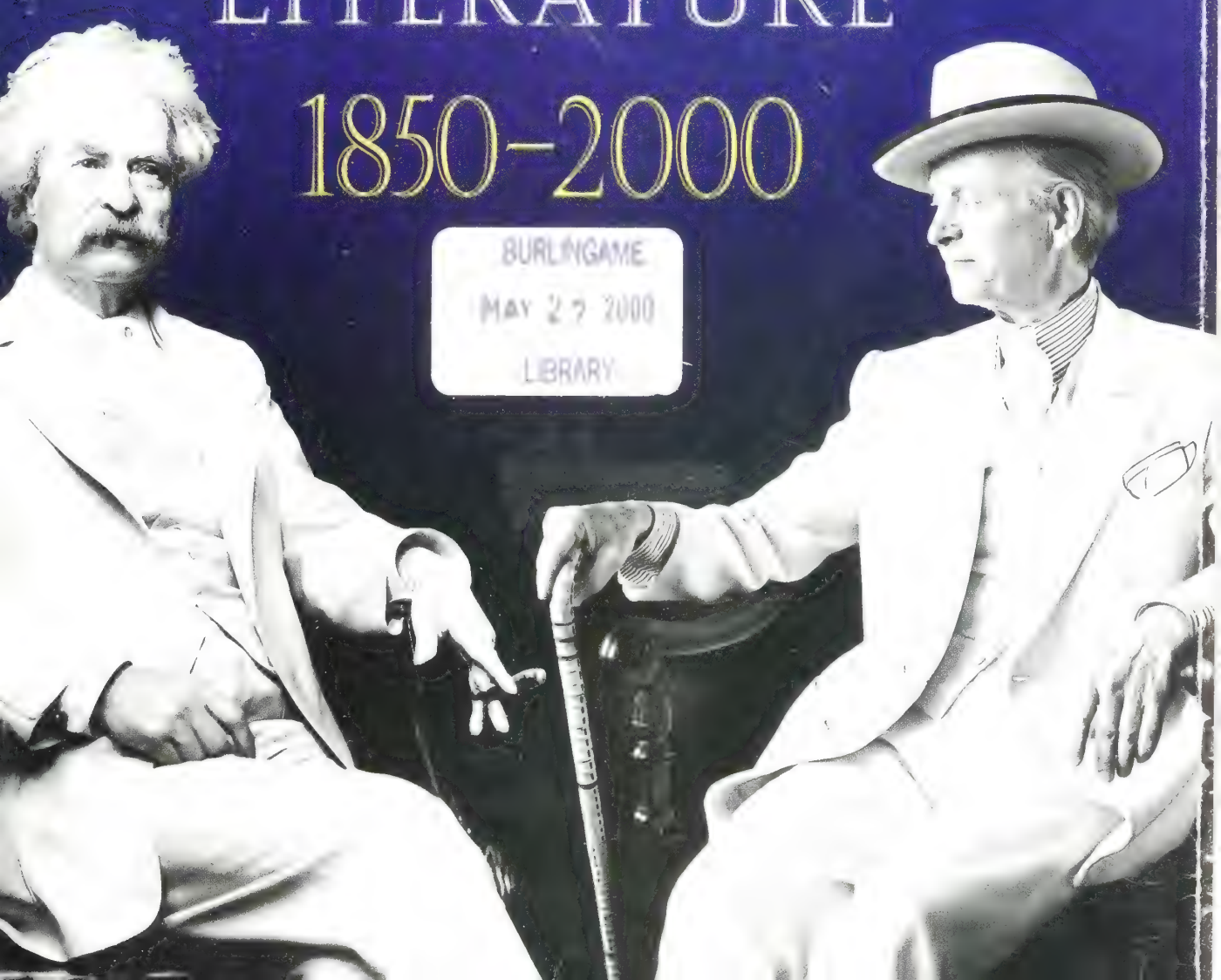
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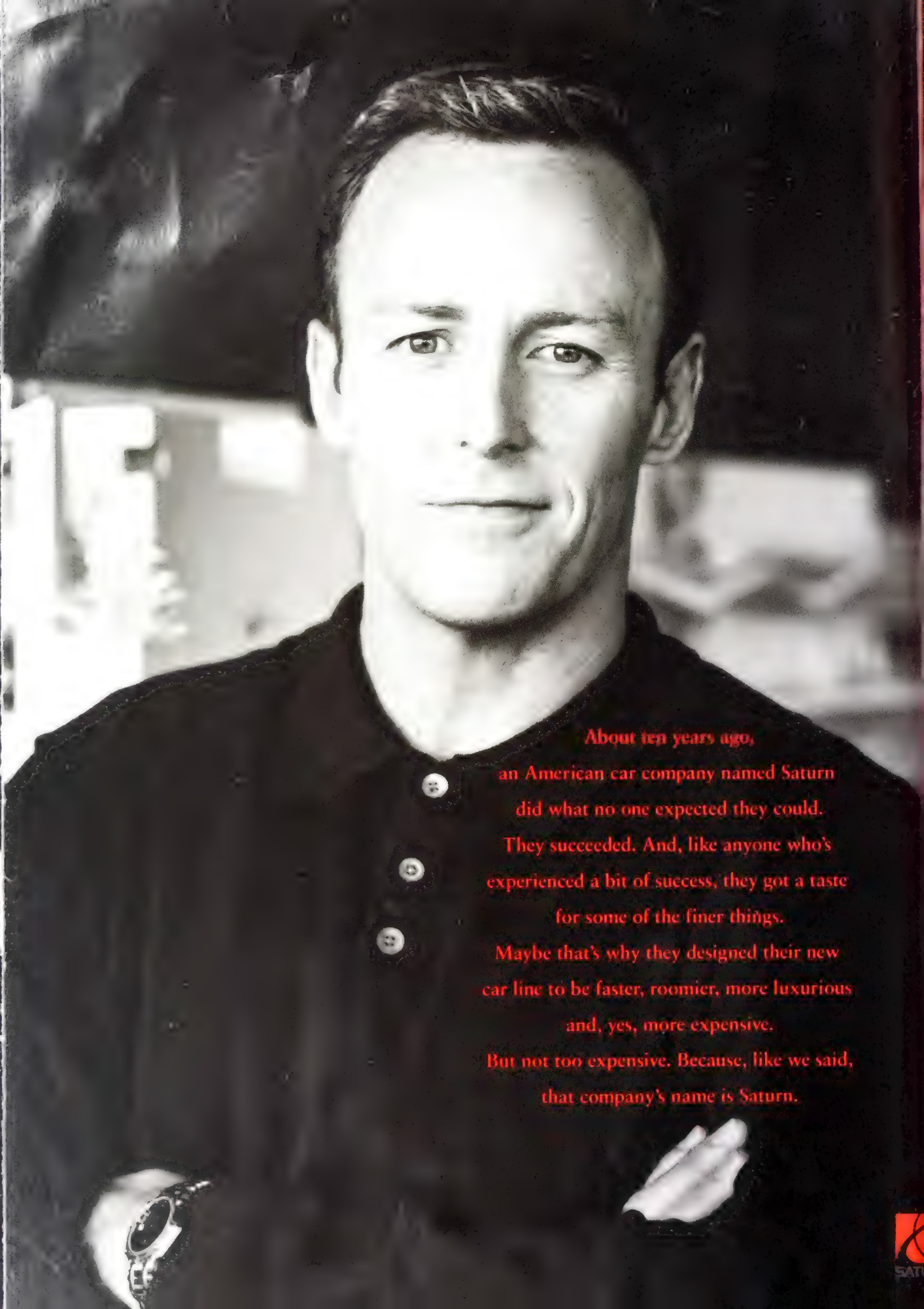
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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 7, 2000

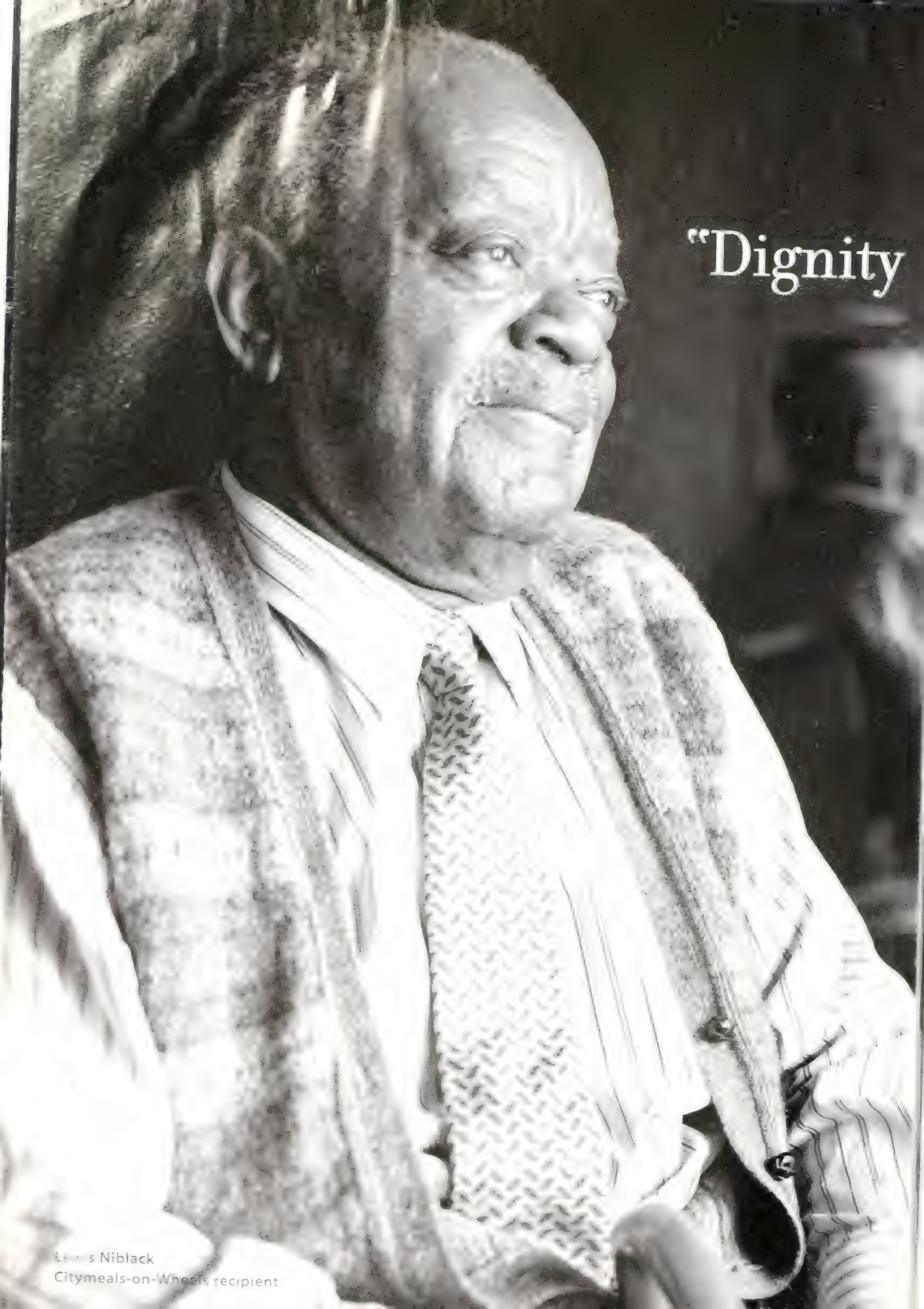
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Now, at the beginning of a new millennium, we are still seeking to achieve American ideals and to make their meaning clear not only at home, but also around the world. I am confident that, in this new age, *Harper's Magazine* will continue to capture the American quest with its keen intelligence and wonderful sense of style.

Best wishes for a memorable anniversary celebration.

Bill Clinton



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Harper's Magazine this month celebrates its 150th birthday, and the current issue has been dressed for the occasion. The editorial pages run to nearly twice the normal number; the copy has been set in somewhat showier forms of the customary typefaces; and the authors assembled under the anniversary rubrics count among their company some of the most prominent figures to be found anywhere in the galleries of contemporary writing. The table of contents accounts for the distance traveled between time past and time present, and among the issue's several added attractions the reader will find not only a collection of dispatches from the year 1850 (page 97) and an annotated map of the old Oregon Trail (page 137) but also a not so brief history of the magazine ("Hazards of New Fortune," page 57), an anthology of Readings from the last two decades (page 25), and projections of the future as imagined by ten artists peering into the mist of two new centuries (page 143).

If the issue proves as entertaining to read as it was to edit, the magazine stands a better than even chance of lasting if not another 150 years then at least long enough to convey its respects to the current generation of readers.

Lewis H. Lapham


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LETTERS

HARPER'S

Office of the Mayor
CITY OF NEW YORK

Proclamation

WHEREAS HARPER'S MAGAZINE IS CELEBRATING ITS SESQUICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY WITH A YEAR-LONG SERIES OF EVENTS THAT HAS INCLUDED A NATIONAL READING SERIES, AND TO BENEFIT THE BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY (ONE OF MANY CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEW YORK CITY'S WRITING COMMUNITY). THE CELEBRATION CULMINATES WITH A GRAND GALA AT THE MUSEUM OF [illegible] THAT WAS EMBELLISHED [illegible] AND

WHEREAS [illegible] BROTHERS, HEADED BY FORMER MAYOR JAMES HARPER (AND ONE GOAL WAS TO INTEREST THE PUBLIC IN BUYING BOOKS.) WITHIN SIX MONTHS CIRCULATION REACHED 50,000. IN ITS FIRST YEAR, HARPER'S PUBLISHED REPRINTS OF FICTION BY FAMOUS ENGLISH AUTHORS, INCLUDING DICKENS, THACKERAY, TROLLOPE AND GEORGE ELLIOT, AS WELL AS NON-FICTION. SOON IT BEGAN TO RUN WORK BY AMERICAN WRITERS AND [illegible] IN 1873, THE MAGAZINE REPORTED THAT "OVER 100,000 CHILDREN ARE AT WORK IN THE [illegible]" IN THE 1880S, THE EDITOR'S EASY CHAIR COLUMN CHAMPIONED WOMEN'S RIGHTS, AND

WHEREAS [illegible] MILLAY AND LANGSTON HUGHES. IN THE PAGES OF HARPER'S A FREED SLAVE TOLD HIS [illegible] LEON TROTSKY TOLD READERS "WHAT HITLER WANTS," AND HENRY STIMSON REPORTED [illegible] JOINED BY THE BEST AUTHORS OF TODAY, AS THE HARPER'S TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE CONTINUES INTO A THIRD CENTURY.

NOW THEREFORE, I, RUDOLPH W. GIULIANI, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, IN RECOGNITION OF THIS IMPORTANT ANNIVERSARY, DO HEREBY PROCLAIM THE MONTH OF JUNE, 2000 IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK AS [illegible]

Rudolph W. Giuliani
MAYOR

[illegible] THE CITY OF NEW YORK TO BE AFFIXED

Harper's Magazine welcomes letters. Please address mail to Letters, Harper's Magazine, [illegible] New York, NY, 10012, or e-mail us at letters@harpers.org. Short letters are likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume precludes individual [illegible]

ALLING A MAID A MAID

Barbara Ehrenreich's article, a rade against the practice of hiring ousekeepers ["Maid to Order," April], was elitist and insulting. Obviously, houseworkers should be paid a ving wage and have health and pen-on benefits (preferably, in my opinon, through a union). Obviously, ney should be treated with respect by heir employers. But Ehrenreich's assertion that the "peculiar intimacy" of ousecleaning is demeaning demeans he very people who do it. Her attiude reminds me of the Hindu caste ystem, in which people who tan eather and make shoes are considered to be lowly, since their trade deals with dead animals and feet. It is precisely this attitude that must be done away with (and yes, you may note my last name).

I remember myself, in my hippie days, sitting poolside with my older, affluent sister-in-law and announcing prissily, "I would never have a maid—it's so patronizing to women and minorities!" To which she replied, "Well, then, what should I do—hire Janice? She's forty-two, she has two kids, and she can't even read or write" (all of which were true). I didn't have an answer then, and I still don't.

By the way, I have never hired a housecleaner but will not hesitate to do so as soon as I can afford it.

Pamela Hunt Shoemaker
New York City

Regarding your article "Maid to Order," am I to understand the author's position is that a woman who has the brains and capacity to find the cure for cancer should *not* devote every waking hour to research but should take the time to clean her own house, thereby reducing research time, in order to not oppress a "cleaning lady"? How ironic it would be if this "cleaning lady" had an out-of-work husband who was sick with a cancer that could be cured by the findings of someone who spends her time on research, not housecleaning.

I find your rhetoric unsustainable.

Jennifer T. Grainger
Stockton, Calif.

No, I don't think scrubbing my own toilet would make me a better person. I have a job I love that pays me well. It makes sense for me to work long hours at a high rate and pay someone else a lower rate to do my housework. I prefer to spend my precious free time relaxing and playing with my children (as opposed to, say, waxing floors or vacuuming under beds). And yes, my maid is a foreign-born woman of color; that seems to be the kind of person who does cleaning work in these parts.

Barbara Ehrenreich's essay ended on a politically correct, self-righteous note that I was frankly disappointed to read in *Harper's*: "the moral challenge is . . . to make work visible again." Give me a break! Work is already a major part of my life and personal makeup. But scrubbing, vacuuming, bending, and lifting aren't the work I choose to do. This was a long story about nothing.

Brooke Stauffer
Bethesda, Md.

With the encouragement of feminism, millions of women have pushed aside a whole range of misgivings about paying strangers to take care of their children. Good luck to Barbara Ehrenreich if she thinks she can now get their consciences to twinge over hiring other women to clean their houses.

Elizabeth Bernstein
Bisbee, Ariz.

We were interested to read Barbara Ehrenreich's article, not least (though not only) because of her claim that the "demand for 'wages for housework' has sunk to the status of a curio, along with the consciousness-raising groups in which women once rallied support in their struggles with messy men." Those of us in the International Wages for Housework Campaign (now based in England, Spain, the United States, and the Caribbean, and with a number of autonomous organizations in the network, including International Black Women for Wages for Housework), exhausted but exhilarated from just having organized a sixty-



[illegible] Official Women's Strike on [illegible] and Women's Day [illegible] amazed by this.

[illegible] Finally, many feminists already [illegible] up until this point [illegible] movement which [illegible] demanding wages for caring work and pay equity in the global market.

[illegible]
International Wages for Housework Campaign
[illegible] Philadelphia

Barbara Ehrenreich's article "Maid [illegible]" carried off boldly, speaking [illegible] class, even Marx, but the concluding admonishment to "make work visible again" showed both indirection and pusillanimity. I would suggest that this is the consequence of neglecting the foundation of class: the sexual division of labor.

My wife is currently a computer engineer, and I am a stay-at-home dad. This division of labor reflects the [illegible] each of us brought to our relationship: she received secondary education, I did not, and our histories followed suit. Our daughter, one year old, has already begun to mimic my domestic activities; she is learning to [illegible] "housework" from her father. It should be obvious from this example that the issue is not gender, as feminists incorrectly thought, but the division of labor (which class societies [illegible]).

The Bolsheviks (following Engels's exposition of the problem in *[illegible] Private Property* [illegible] proposed to put [illegible] outside the home, [illegible] century later. According to the Bolsheviks, [illegible] providing communal services for day care, laundries, and dining halls. [illegible] Lenin of 1919 explicitly [illegible] mental work with manual work. [illegible] was their rational formula for [illegible] communism.

Hiring maids to do the domestic [illegible] tion, even widespread promotion, of prostitution cannot be very far behind. As capital's power increases, there will increasingly come to be a price on everything—unless we choose to take back our labor.

Of course, your allegiance to capital's basic principles will dissuade you from printing this letter—but I thought you might like to know that not all of us out here in readerland are indoctrinated dupes.

Barry Stoller
Northampton, Mass.

The Maids International, our franchise owners, and franchise employees are offended by a number of statements made in Barbara Ehrenreich's article. In particular, we are greatly disturbed by the statement, "Household workers . . . are disproportionately women of color: 'Lower' kinds of people for a 'lower' kind of work." At The Maids International, we value the women and men who work in our system. We don't believe that the color of a person's skin has any bearing on the content of his or her character. They are good people who work hard to support their families. We provide a safe and professional working environment with opportunities for advancement. Cleaning homes is not demeaning. It's honest and honorable work that benefits our employees and is appreciated by our customers.

Daniel J. Bishop
President
The Maids International, Inc.
Omaha

The ethical dilemma posed by domestic service is much like the problem of slavery as it was experienced in the eighteenth century. Slavery was always considered an undesirable station in life and mistreatment of slaves was always unethical, but no one, not even slaves, considered slavery to be wrong until the moral implications of Thomas Jefferson's Declaration clarified the unsavoriness of slavery in human relations. Freed slaves thought nothing of owning slaves themselves [illegible] as domestic workers dream of a day when they might hire maids of their own. As for the labor of the children who produce our children's toys—it can best be described as "out of sight, out of mind."

As good people once held slaves, good people will continue to exploit domestic help and sweatshop labor until two things happen: (1) we reach a threshold of moral awareness, and (2) domestic service and other exploited labor are replaced by some less compromised means of accomplishing the same tasks.

K. J. Walters
Monroe, N.Y.

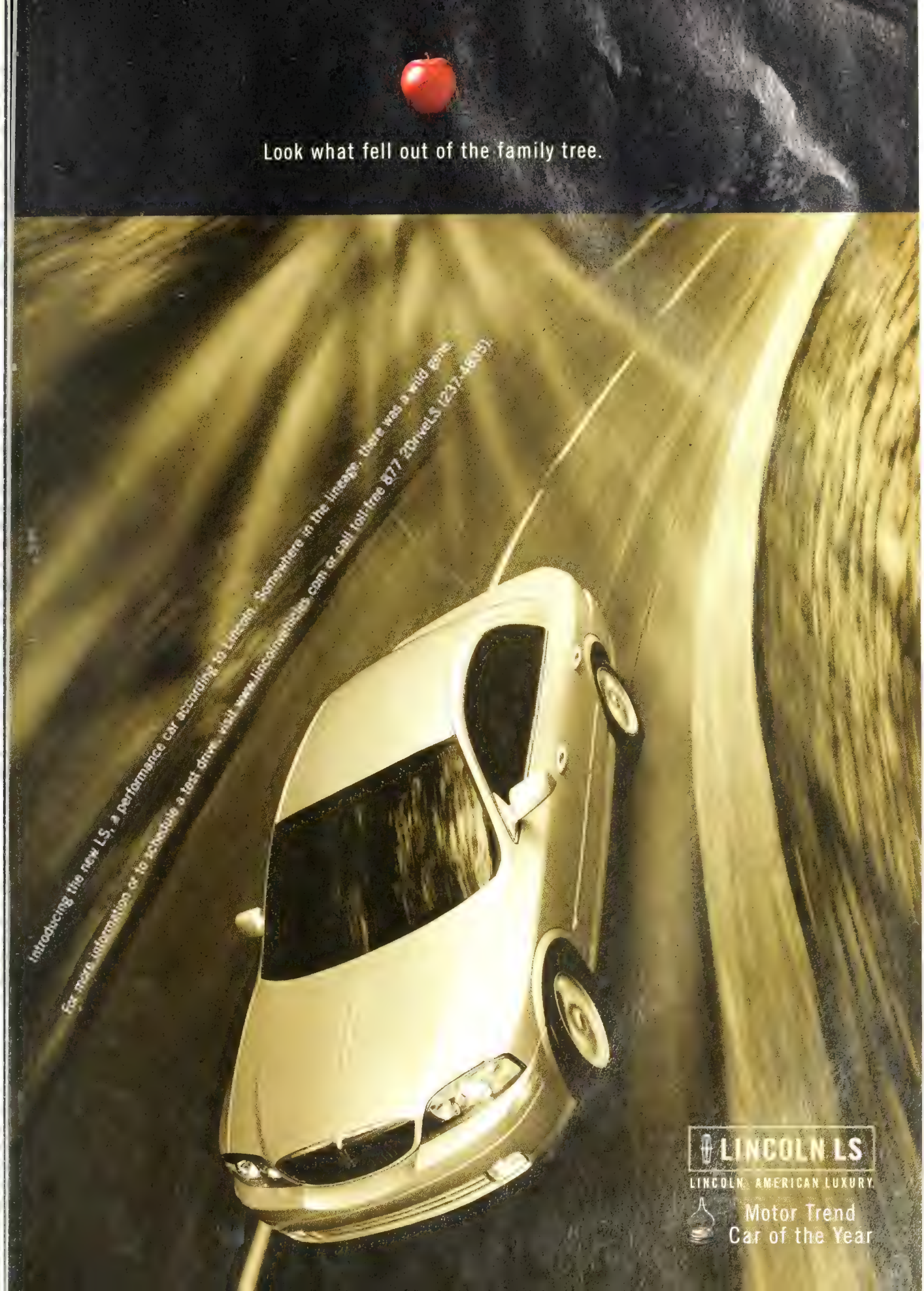
As in her essay "Nickel-and-Dimed" [January 1999], Barbara Ehrenreich enters the working class for two weeks but retains her privilege to leave. Predictably, she finds it unacceptable. Of course she does; she has other options. Her position is one envied by many people of even her own socioeconomic class; she is paid for work she loves and has gained national recognition for it. Only at the end of her article, when Ehrenreich parallels the disregard for one's personal detritus with a disregard for industrial waste, does her article graduate from whining to serious criticism. One wishes that she'd spent more time building her argument for environmental awareness and less time moralizing on the evils of employing workers in the home.

Kami Payson
San Francisco

Barbara Ehrenreich's essay was strident, rhetorical, and predictable. Every society is composed of two groups: the rich and powerful who are few, and the poor and oppressed who are many. It was ever thus, and readers of *Harper's Magazine* had better be grateful for it.

Eric Bourland
Arlington, Va.

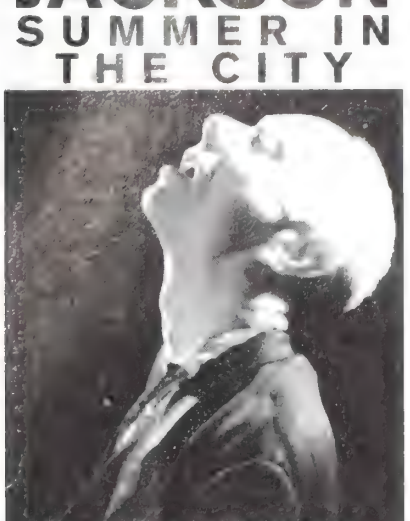
Barbara Ehrenreich trots out her predictable litany of feminist complaints against men, capitalism, affluent people, and other feminists who don't share her sensibilities. She sees husbands as exploiters of women and


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chides them for not doing their fair share of housework. There is no apparent effort on her part to acknowledge the fact that men work more hours outside the home, are expected to be the primary providers for the family, and are usually the ones who do the dirtiest, most dangerous, and most life-depleting jobs. Next time, Ehrenreich should write an investigative report that looks sympathetically at the sacrifices made by male firefighters, miners, construction workers, and other men in the "death professions." She dismisses men's contributions to household maintenance and ignores the fact that the husband's full-time job makes it possible for his wife not to have to work outside the home.

Christopher C. Heal
Nashville

Barbara Ehrenreich's otherwise informative essay is marred by a common misconception. She decries the less-than-sanitary results of cosmetic cleaning practices ("the water I wiped around floors was often an unsavory gray," and "a rag moistened with disinfectant will not get a countertop clean"). The maid-for-hire routine is to "create the appearance" of a good cleaning, she complains, rather than to actually clean. This is exactly right. Cleaning, for the most part, *is* a cosmetic practice. Except for ridding dust from the environment of an asthmatic, making sure actual food isn't lying around to attract pests, and scouring cutting surfaces on which food will sit, cleaning simply doesn't matter—despite what our mothers taught us. Humans, like other animals, evolved quite nicely in dirty environs. If people prefer nicely folded toilet tissue and a signature smell rather than sanitized counter scrubs, fine. No one has died of [illegible] caused by dirty floors. It is refrigerator rot that sends lives, not dreams, in refrigerators.

Kristi Hess
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Scenes from my life as a maid:

Climbing a ladder to change the kitty litter in an attic twice a week.

Heckling [illegible] scrubbing toilets.

maid service owner's supervision sweeping the stairs with dustpan and broom, collapsing with asthma afterwards.

On my hands and knees polishing a tiled kitchen floor under the housewife's supervision. Polishing her bathroom floors likewise. Finding my jacket, which this woman had taken downstairs "to put away" for me, balled up in the bottom corner of the closet. The fold with a hollow where she'd punched it into place. (Her husband had one just like it, she'd said.)

Scrubbing a windowless bathroom, seven years' worth of mold off the shower doors, and reeling out past the glass afterwards, dizzy with unventilated ammonia fumes.

The weight and size of Kirby vacuum cleaners. The sheer weight of them. Lightones are universally said by clients and supervisors alike, "not to clean."

Eating in an underground car park: coffee from a thermos: lunch.

I was a maid in the early Eighties in the South Bay area of Los Angeles.

Barbara Ehrenreich gets a lot of it right, but she is wrong when she says that the posture of submission is making a stealthy comeback.

The posture of submission is currently making a blatant comeback. It was stealthy in the early Eighties when Reagan and yuppiedom were just feeling their way.

It was absolutely clear back then that what the client was buying was submission, and, if possible, the right to humiliate.

If the client was home I cleaned kitchen and bathroom floors on my hands and knees; the client insisted I cleaned stairs the same way.

If the client was not home I was simply alone in the client's landscape of secretion: soap-scummed bathrooms, filthy ovens and broiler, and black glass-fronted appliances refrigerators to be cleaned out, loads of washing (often to be taken to the basement from a third-floor apartment—please dry and fold); acres of shag pile to be separated from the plastic toys unbiodegradably skeined into it, then vacuumed with the impossible monster vacuum; more acres of clear glass door, by the sea, to be [illegible] no hint of salt or sweat—an impossible schedule, sometimes fitting in

nscheduled things (" and it wou
uld ... ") to keep the client from
tching services.

I worked for a company, not inde
ndently. All the clients were
nite.

The company charged $15 an
our, I got $5. By the time I got
me I was often too tired to eat.

One of my supervisors was white,
e other Latina. The owner of the
siness was Filipina. Inflicting the
nishments of poverty on the poor
a game anyone can play. All it
kes is money.

I will never hire someone to do
y housework. I'll choke to death
st.

loira McAuliffe
rtland, Oreg.

EVIEWING VIETNAM

The Vietnam War, begun by
mericans who believed that my
ing the United States did in the
orld was good, rapidly convinced
unger Americans that everything
e United States did in the world
as evil. James William Gibson's de-
rmination to believe that the Viet-
am War was an inevitable result of
merican wickedness ["Revising
ietnam, Again," April] forces him
distort or ignore a great deal of
hat my new book, *American*
ragedy, says, especially with respect
the presidency of John F.
ennedy.

Astonishingly, Gibson suggests
hat I did not address the ideas
bout limited war advanced by
axwell Taylor, Kennedy's special
ilitary representative and later
hairman of the Joint Chiefs of
taff, and Walt Rostow, an adviser
Kennedy, even though *American*
ragedy describes many proposals for
ar in Southeast Asia that these
wo men addressed to President
ennedy during 1961 and shows
ow Kennedy repeatedly rejected
em. He says that I ignored
ennedy's interest in unconven-
onal war and the Special Forces,
hich is discussed in Chapter 3, or
he Kennedy Administration's at-
empts to improve counterinsur-
ency, which are analyzed in Chap-
ter 5. The emphasis of the Kennedy Administration's efforts in Latin America and elsewhere, as I showed, was to improve counterinsurgency operations without direct American military participation.

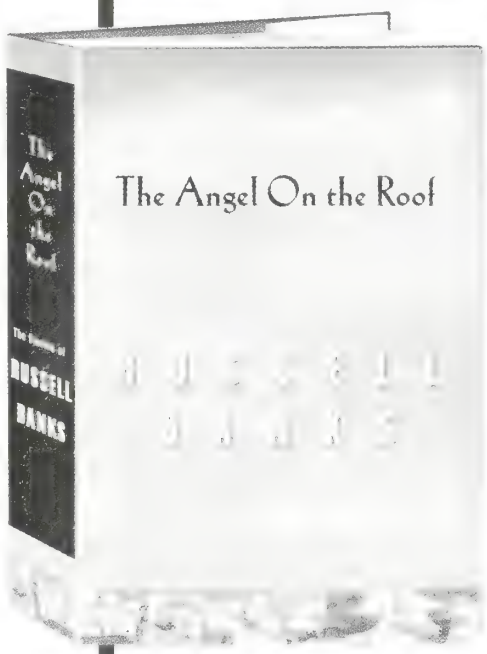
"As we know," Gibson writes, "neither Kennedy, Johnson, nor Nixon stopped the United States from going to war in Southeast Asia." Yet *American Tragedy* extensively documents numerous occasions during 1961, 1962, and 1963 on which Kennedy did exactly that, rejecting the near unanimous pro-

[illegible] number of [illegible] in Laos, South Vietn[illegible] also showed [illegible] "reluctantly"—that he preferred a neutral government in Laos to [illegible] military involvement [illegible] Western forces. His rejection [illegible] Krock recorded at the time, are only one of many occasions on which he rejected Southeast Asia as a place to fight a war. As a historian I would never claim to know what Kennedy would have done in 1964 or 1965.

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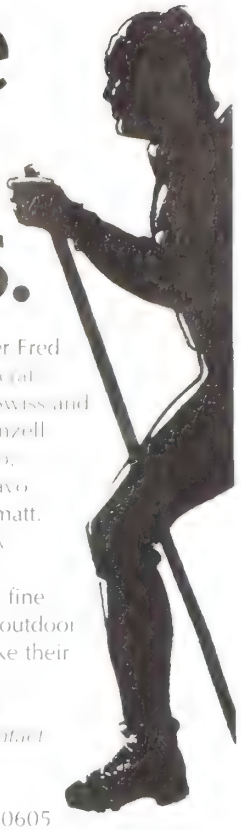
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but it is now clear beyond any doubt that he had refused, on a number of earlier occasions, to do what Johnson did during those years. He also had a wide-ranging diplomatic agenda, explored at length in *America's Tragedy*, which could not be reconciled with war in Southeast Asia—an agenda abandoned by his successor. If Gibson refuses to acknowledge these facts, then it is he who is obstinately clinging to myths about the history of our involvement in Southeast Asia.

David Kaiser
Naval War College
Jamestown, R.I.

With the appearance of David Kaiser's *American Tragedy*, the debate on Vietnam continues. Fingers are pointed and blame is assessed. Henry Kissinger sanctimoniously blames Democrats Kennedy and Johnson. The Democrats bitterly accuse Kissinger and Nixon. Other former foreign policy makers such as Robert McNamara busily rewrite history in their personal quests for redemption.

But does it really matter whether Eisenhower, Kennedy, or Johnson sought to escalate the war—or on what day of what month they did so?

Scholars delight in such speculation, but these debates fail to address the fundamental lessons that remain hidden in the verbal thicket that has grown up around the Vietnam War. These lessons might best be learned in the context of the Gulf War, a conflict that is in many ways a continuation of the Vietnam imbroglio. Indeed, the Gulf War is far from finished.

Today, there are 35,000 American troops mired in the quicksand along the Gulf. U.S. leaders assured the American public that Iraq would not become "another Vietnam." They then unleashed a display of destruction that Baghdad had not seen since the Mongols overran the city in 12[illegible].

After dropping more than a million tons of munitions and firing some 700 Tomahawk missiles at Iraqi targets, the United States finds Saddam Hussein still in power. This political thug has already outlasted three U.S. presidents. The equi[illegible]

t of Vietnam's Agent Orange is
t debilitating Gulf War Syndrome.
anwhile, the American use of
2,000 uranium-tipped shells has
a carcinogenic trail that has re-
ed in massive birth defects among
Iraqi people. Informed citizens
erywhere are saddened and sick-
ed by this one-sided technowar.

Despite many obvious differences
ween the two conflicts, Gulf policy
monstrates that we have yet to
rn the lessons of Vietnam. Despite
erwhelming firepower, the United
tes lacks the necessary brain pow-
American leaders must increase
ir understanding of the peoples
cultures of the Gulf. In the 1980s,
example, the United States helped
ate Saddam Hussein, who then
nt the 1990s bedeviling the United
tes, despite our attempts to "neu-
lize" him the way the Kennedy Ad-
nistration had plotted the destruc-
n of South Vietnam's president,
o Dinh Diem, in 1963.

The major problems in the Gulf
political in nature, as were the
blems in Vietnam. Delicate social
d political problems cannot be
bombed or "missiled" out of exis-
tence. Tomahawk diplomacy is
doomed to failure.

Today, the United States is pour-
ing billions of dollars into the Gulf
region in an attempt to destroy the
so-called rogue states while propping
up decrepit regimes that sit astride
60 percent of the world's oil.

There are heavy political, econom-
ic, and moral costs for such policy.
These costs must be measured against
the benefits of a cautious strategic with-
drawal from the Gulf or, at the very
least, an effective low-profile presence
sometime in the near future.

James A. Bill
The College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, Va.

MEN OVERBOARD

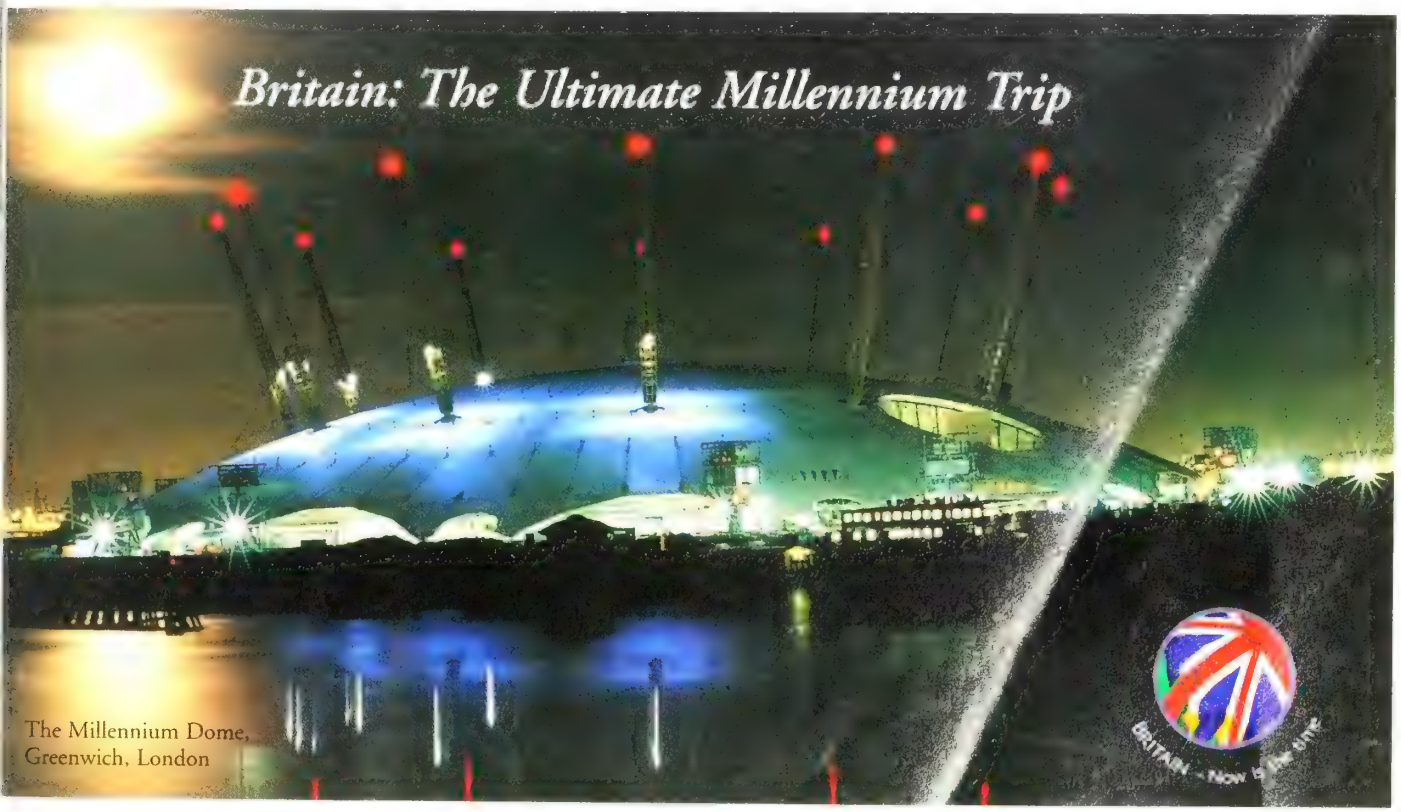
I'm neither florid nor heavyset, nor
am I numbered among the "thorough-
paced Tories." But I do subscribe to
National Review and occasionally even
write for it. I also subscribe to *Harper's*,
and while I've generally found Lewis
Lapham to be politically obtuse, quick
with the
and Irish
tet his
O'Brian ["Stupor Mun
April] think
about him. A wonderful piece
ing: Stupor Mundi.

John R.
Chicago

My readings of E. B. White tend
me to keep it short and simple. Thus
follows me a battle in *Blue at the*
Mizzen, Patrick O'Brian writes: "The
dead were over the side with little
ceremony and less mourning." Until
now, I thought O'Brian's passing sim-
ilarly observed. Lapham's elegy was
welcome, competent, loving, and
damned beautiful.

Robert
Heath, Tex.

I have been a subscriber to *Harper's*
Magazine for roughly thirty years, and
during earlier days I enjoyed it very
much. For a number of recent years,
however, I have noticed what seems to



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[illegible] and spinal. Well, [illegible] the short stories [illegible] deals with people and [illegible] of [illegible] unpleasantness. When I [illegible] recklessly read [illegible] from cover to cover, I have suffered days of depression. Furthermore, the "artwork" [illegible] frontis[illegible] frequently sophomoric and useless.

I was [illegible] amused to discover in the last issue that Lewis Lapham has found something, Patrick O'Brian's books [illegible] which he is uniquely [illegible]. This was particularly surprising in that I share his enthusiasm for [illegible] I find myself bitterly [illegible] every subject, but I can't remember him ever liking anything.

J. R. Beall
Newark, Ohio

I very much enjoyed the Note-Book on Patrick O'Brian. I am a great fan, currently enjoying the crushing of slavers in *The Commodore*. I hope that one day high school students will be struggling over comparisons of O'Brian with Austen, Dickens, and Conrad.

I was disappointed, however, that you did not give O'Brian his full due. True, the recently deceased should not be made to answer for their mistakes in life, but no one's life is complete without the good and the bad. I refer to O'Brian's first family, whom he abandoned—and the liberties he frequently took with the truth in talking about his own past (as detailed in Dean King's recent *Patrick O'Brian: A Life Revealed*).

I suspect that Aubrey would have me flogged around the fleet for such [illegible] and most [illegible]. I have, however, always been impressed by Lapham's and *Harper's* unflinching look at the truth, no matter how [illegible], and I was surprised by this rare aversion of the eyes.

Joan Wamser
Truth or Consequences, N.Mex.

I enjoyed Dave Eggers's recent [illegible] to the books of Patrick O'Brian, but I must point him to one small mistake. [illegible] part of the [illegible] Stephen Maturin [illegible] Irish [illegible] Sir Patrick [illegible] the Spanish [illegible] title of courtesy and not [illegible] naval rank (he explains this in the second book). His correct rank [illegible] the title of the book—master and commander, from which we get today's lieutenant commander and commander, ranks just below that of a modern captain.

The rank of post captain was so avidly sought by naval commanders of the period because, once attained (barring death or grievous dishonor), one was guaranteed a position and rank for life and would eventually make it to admiral regardless of ability or connections.

Steve Gray
Clifton, N.J.

LET HE WITHOUT SENSE . . .

Regaling others with bloopers, truisms, and/or unintentionally hilarious (mis)statements from students' work [Anders Henriksson's "Hindsight into the Future," Readings, April] is a time-honored practice that helps keep teachers and professors sane. (I do it myself, though I prefer to keep it *entre nous*.)

It's also, however, a cheap shot. Before we get too tweedily comfy, we might be reminded of what can often give rise to these student errors: our lectures, often hurried, using names and terms unknown and unexplained (or "explained" three weeks earlier, before the last exam), illegible handwriting on the blackboard, speech that is tired and slurred, impatience, ad-libbing without thinking.

How about transcriptions of some equally hilarious professorial slips? (I'm not about to publish my own.)

James McCalla
Bowdoin College
Brunswick, Maine

FUR SMOOTHED

I would have been grateful if in printing my horrible letter to NOW president Galen Sherwin ["Crossing the Bikini Line," Readings, April] defending PETA's "panty ads" campaign you had mentioned that Sherwin had [illegible] and we have long since agreed to disagree on whether or not PETA's "bikini wax" anti-fur-trim ad is anti-feminist. Readers might also wish to know that Sherwin has made it clear that NOW does not lend any support to the fur trade, and that, in fact, she herself wrote a pointed letter to the Fur Information Council (FIC) representative, complaining that FIC diminishes the meaning of "Freedom of Choice" when it uses that slogan to describe a woman's decision to wear fur, no matter what.

Sometimes a human being, like a beaten animal, can take only so much and, unfortunately, Sherwin's letter was the straw that broke this camel's back. The evidence of appalling animal suffering that crosses my desk every day, the hard slog it is to penetrate people's busy lives and break their old unwittingly cruel habits, not to mention the inane arguments one has to deal with from those justifying animal abuse (such as, "God put animals here to be used as we see fit"), take their toll.

Sometimes PETA's tactics, like our naked marches and obnoxious ad campaigns, can make the difference between keeping important yet depressing subjects invisible or having them be widely seen. Part of our job is to shake people up and even shock them. The alternative is to be ignored in the torrent of Monica Lewinsky–style stories that dominate the popular press. Silence, indeed, is the worst enemy of the oppressed of any species.

I am not proud of my childish letter to Sherwin, but I am proud of what PETA has accomplished for animals.

Ingrid E. Newkirk
President
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)
Norfolk, Va.

According to Ingrid Newkirk, the PETA ad implying that female body hair is unattractive does no harm. She blithely claims that most women have decided for themselves that unshaven limbs and an unplucked bikini line look unsightly. Of course she's right that most American women endeavor to rid themselves of body hair. But the effort is not due to some liberated and objective view of their appearance; it's surely induced by society's expecta

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nt ["Trekking the City o
Americans, unlike child-
Americans, value adult pleasure
without the company of their
mature offspring.
magine that their fellow travelers
diners, and museum visitors wanted
of excruciating discomfort? Perhaps
our intrepid travelers are planning
ist to demonstrate how inconsider
ate and culturally blinkered Ameri
cans can be.
Calif.

My husband and I lived in Pari
with a fifteen- to twenty
month-old child and sinc
spent a month each sum
eight and four have experi
enced Paris at every stage of thei
development (including
smaller one, her existence in m
pregnant belly). Although Jame
McManus's fantasy of his ordeals i
quite amusing, it utterly contradict
at children and Paris over th
Paris is a very
Children Even
has some form of small park, com
with climbing apparatus
ground a ball
and usually a sandbox. Parents tra
with children need not plan
ther large cities in Ameri
ca: they have simply to look on the
map, spot the green patch neares
destination, and rest
McManus
most French park
full access
ns may seem mere
quibbling, but McManus's underlyin
In fact, we have found tha
French culture and habits are buil

Texas

I am
all in the
ther.

THE CITY OF PEDIA-LITE

cky hart/mezzo-soprano

alery ryvkin/conductor

cky: the arts is not the most stable areer. then, when you have a child, the ncertainty really hits home.

ut little by little leila's taught us how to alance this sometimes precarious life in the rts with the need for long-term financial ell-being. she took the time to find out ho we are...what's important to us...

e couldn't be doing this if we thought we ere compromising amanda's future.



"amanda's needs are not negotiable"



leila ross/financial consultant

leila: vicky's instincts were to put their assets in a nice safe place...t-bills and cds.

we took a hard look at what they really needed—immediate and long term—and put together a plan. eventually, we created a portfolio designed not only for growth but also for a steady income so vicky could devote herself full-time to her singing.

then amanda came along, which gave a whole new meaning to "long-term investing."

Merrill Lynch


Natural redhead.
www.redwax.com

HARPER'S INDEX

Number of the 155 U.S. magazines published in 1955 that are published today : 13
Number of years Karl Marx spent writing opinion pieces for the *New-York Daily Tribune* before publishing *Das Kapital* : 13
Portion of the 19th century it took Russia to conquer the Chechens : 1/2
Number of "psychological operations" specialists that the U.S. Army sent to work for CNN last year : 5
Average number of U.S. news stories about Elián González published or aired each day of the first 5 months of his stay here : 222
Estimated ratio of immigrants arriving in the U.S. in the 1890s to the number returning home during that period : 3:2
Points by which the percentage of U.S. residents born abroad has changed since 1850 : –0.4
Points by which the percentage of Americans of African descent has changed since then : –2.8
Estimated percentage change in the Native American population of California during the 1850s : –65
Portion of California's revenue between 1852 and 1870 composed of taxes paid by Chinese laborers : 1/2
Estimated number of "river pirates" operating on New York City's waterfront in 1850 : 500
Portion of rivers in the mid-Atlantic U.S. whose water levels set record lows last summer : 3/4
Minimum number of aquatic species carried in ship ballasts to new ecosystems on any given day : 3,000
Estimated acres of topsoil eroded worldwide each year : 3,700,000,000
Hours of cooking required to remove the "toxins" from tomatoes, according to an 1860 women's magazine : 3
Ratio of the amount Americans spent on potato chips in 1996 to spending on federal political campaigns that year : 2:1
Years after the Great Potato Famine began that Britain loosened its land-ownership requirements for Irish voters : 5
Number of times that U.S. president Zachary Taylor had ever voted in a presidential election before taking office in 1849 : 0
Number of years after the term "confidence man" was coined in 1849 that the word "industrialist" was introduced : 15
Percentage change since 1992 in the average household income of the lowest-paid fifth of Silicon Valley workers : –2.7
Number of residents of India without access to fresh drinking water for every Internet user there : 115
Number of immigrants Japan would require in order to maintain its present workforce through the year 2050 : 30,450,000
Weeks before Peru's national election last April that President Alberto Fujimori raised the minimum wage by 18 percent : 4
Number of Japanese couples who used Dolly the cloned sheep in their wedding photo before researchers ended the practice : 1
Number of "marriage studies" majors learning "the art of getting and staying married" last term at a Pennsylvania college : 8
Number of condoms to be requisitioned per day to each U.N. peacekeeper deployed in Congo and Sierra Leone this year : 1
Estimated minimum value of the diamonds sold to De Beers by Angolan rebels since 1992 : $1,000,000,000
Estimated barrels of oil illegally exported by Iraq last year : 8,100,000
Price of a gallon of gas in the United Kingdom last April : $4.84
Price a year earlier : $3.87
Amount Shell Oil paid last year to sponsor the wedding reception of the King of Buganda, Uganda : $3,000
Ratio of the average 1850 price in Texas of a healthy male slave to that of 200 acres of prime farmland : 1:1
Price an Illinois company charges for a pen embedded with Abraham Lincoln's "genetic essence" : $1,650
Years after becoming a priest that Gregor Mendel completed the work that would earn him the title father of genetics : 16
Number of Charles Darwin's children who became eugenicists : 1
Rank of Father's Day among days on which the largest number of collect calls are made in the U.S. : 1
Chance that the husband in a two-income U.S. household earns less than his wife : 1 in 3
Chances that a 19th century "opium-eater" in Albany, New York, was a woman : 4 in 5
Average amount spent on direct advertising to U.S. children in 1983 and 1998, respectively, per child : $2.68, $36.60
Year in which "sold down the river" entered the American lexicon : 1850

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of April 2000. Sources available upon request.
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INTRODUCING

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READINGS

[Essay, October 1986]

IN PRAISE OF ILLITERACY

By Hans Magnus Enzensberger. This essay was adapted from a talk given by the author upon receiving the 1985 Heinrich Böll Prize from the city of Cologne. In 1997 it was included in Zig Zag, a collection of Enzensberger's essays, published by the New Press. Enzensberger is the author of several books, including The Sinking of the Titanic, *a poem. Translated from the German by Michael Lipson.*

CAN WE DISPENSE WITH THE WRITTEN word? That is the question. Anyone who poses it will have to speak about illiteracy. There's just one problem: the illiterate is never around when he is the subject of conversation. He simply doesn't show up; he takes no notice of our assertions; he remains silent. I would therefore like to take up his defense.

Every third inhabitant of our planet manages to get by without the art of reading and without the art of writing. This includes roughly 900 million people, and their numbers will certainly increase. The figure is impressive but misleading. For humanity comprises not only the living and the unborn but the dead as well. If they are not forgotten, then the conclusion becomes inevitable that literacy is the exception rather than the rule.

It could occur only to us, that is, to a tiny minority of people who read and write, to think of those who don't as a tiny minority. This notion betrays an ignorance I find insupportable.

I envy the illiterate his memory, his capacity for concentration, his cunning, his inventiveness, his tenacity, his sensitive ear. Please don't imagine that I am dreaming of the noble savage. I am speaking not about romantic phantoms but about people I have met. I am far from idealizing them. I also see their narrow horizons, their illusions, their obstinacy, their quaintness.

You may ask how it comes about that I, of all people, should take the side of those who cannot read. But it's obvious: because it was illiterates who invented literature. Its elementary forms—from myth to children's verse, from fairy tale to song, from prayer to riddle—all are older than writing. Without oral tradition, there would be no poetry; without illiterates, no books.

"But," you will object, "what about the Enlightenment?" No need to tell us. Social interests rest not only on the rulers' material advantages but on immaterial privileges as well. It was the great intellectuals of the eighteenth century who discerned this state of affairs. The people had not come of age, they thought, not only because of political oppression and economic exploitation but also because of their lack of knowledge. From these premises, later generations drew the conclusion that the ability to read and write belongs to any existence fit for a human being.

However, this suggestive idea underwent a succession of noteworthy reinterpretations in the

[illegible Plates September 1994]

OEDIPUS, KING OF THE ROAD

By [illegible] Nussbaum. Mr. Baum has retold the stories of [illegible] of the more than 1 million personalized license plates registered with the California Motor Vehicles Bureau. This story is one of thirteen that Nussbaum has compiled in PLSSPK, *a collection that includes retellings of the [illegible]. A Street car Named Desire, and Jack Kerouac's Diaries.*

ONCE UPON A TIME LONG AGO IN THEBES IMKING. OEDIPUS DAKING. LVMYMRS. LVMYKIDS. THEBENS THINK OEDDY ISCOOL. NOPROBS.

OKAY MAYBE THEREZZ ILITL1. MOTHER WHERE RU? WHERE AI MYDAD? NOCALLZ NEVER. HAVENOT ACLUE. INMYMND IWNDER WHOAMI? IMUST FINDEM

JO MYWIFE GOES, "OED DONT USEE? WERHAPI NOW LETITB." IGO "NOWAY. IAMBOSS. DONTU TELLME MYLIFE. INEED MYMOM. II WILLL FINDHER. FIND BOTHOF THEM."

SOI START SEEKING DATRUTH ABOUT WHO IAM. ITGOEZ ULTRAAA SLOWE. THE SPHYNXS RIDDLE WAS ACINCH BUT NOTTHIZ.

SUDNLEE WEHEAR SHOCKNG NEWS. WHEN IWAS A TINYI THISGRS 4SEER SED IWOOD OFF MY ROYAL OLDMAN THEN MARREE MYMAMA. SICKO RUBBISH, NESTPAS? WHOWHO COUDBE SOGONE? STIL MOMNDAD SENT MEEEEE AWAY. MEE ABABI AWAAAY.

SOWWWWWOFTHIZ MANY MOONS GOBY. IMEET THISGUY ONATRIP. WITOO RUMFLE WHOKNEW? ILLEMY DOPEONEEDMAN.

UGET DAFOTO. MAJR TSURIS. JOJO MYHONEE, MYSQEEZ, MYLAMBY, MIAMOR, MYCUTEE. JOJOY IZZ MYMOMMY.

[illegible] WITHMEE YMEYYMEE THISUS IAMBAEE [illegible] IMSOHAD STOPNOW [illegible] BEHAKE THIS ELSH DUZ STINK. ITZ 2MUCH PAYNE 4ONE2C [illegible]

AIEEEEE!

course of time. In the twinkling of an eye, the concept of enlightenment was replaced by the concept of education. "In terms of the education of the populace," according to Ignaz Heinrich von Wessenberg, a German schoolmaster in Napoleon's time, "the second half of the eighteenth century marks a new epoch. The knowledge of what was accomplished in this regard is joyous news to any friend of mankind, encouraging to the priests of culture, and highly instructive for the leaders of the commonwealth."

As far as the project of literacy goes, we've made great strides. Here, it seems, the philanthropists, the priests of culture, and the leaders of the commonwealth have scored triumphantly. By 1880, the illiteracy rate in Germany had fallen below one percent. The rest of the world has also made enormous progress since UNESCO raised its flag in the fight against illiteracy in 1951. In short: Light has conquered darkness.

Our joy over this triumph has certain limits. The news is too good to be true. The people did not learn to read and write because they felt like it, but because they were forced to do so. Their emancipation was controlled by disenfranchisement. From then on learning went hand in hand with the state and its agencies: the schools, the army, the legal administration. The goal pursued in making the populace literate had nothing to do with enlightenment. The friends of mankind and the priests of culture, who stood up for the people, were merely the henchmen of a capitalist industry that pressed the state to provide it with a qualified workforce. It was not a matter of paving the way for the "writing culture," let alone liberating mankind from its shackles. Quite a different kind of progress was in question. It consisted in taming the illiterates, this "lowest class of men," in stamping out their will and their fantasy, and in exploiting not only their muscle power and skill in handiwork but their brains as well.

For the unlettered human to be done away with, he had first to be defined, tracked down, and unmasked. The concept of illiteracy is not very old. Its invention can be dated with some precision. The word appeared for the first time in a French publication in 1876 and quickly spread all over Europe. At about the same time, Edison invented the lightbulb and the phonograph, Bell the telephone, and Otto the gasoline motor. The connection is clear.

Furthermore, the triumph of popular education in Europe coincides with the maximum development of colonialism. And this is no accident. In the statistics of the period we can find the assertion that the number of illiterates "as compared with the total population of a country is a measure of the people's cultural



"Renaissance Man" by Emil [illegible] [illegible] character by L. Holding Venus, *published by Neue Literatur*

condition." And they do not fail to instruct us that "men [stand on a level] higher, on the average, than women."

This is not a matter of statistics, but a process of discrimination and stigmatization. Behind the figure of the illiterate we can discern Hitler's concept of *der Untermensch*, the subhuman who must be eliminated. A small, radical minority has reserved civilization for itself and now discriminates against all those who will not dance to its tune.

TODAY WE FIND THAT THE ILLITERACY we smoked out has returned. A new figure has conquered the social stage. This new species is the second-order illiterate.

He has come a long way; his loss of memory causes him no suffering; his lack of will makes life easy for him; he values his inability to concentrate; he considers it an advantage that he neither knows nor understands what is happening to him. He is mobile. He is adaptive. He has a talent for getting things done. We need have no worries about him. It contributes to the second-order illiterate's sense of well-being that he has no idea that he is a second-order illiterate. He considers himself well-informed; he can decipher instructions on appliances and tools; he can decode pictograms and checks. And he moves within an environment hermetically sealed against anything that might infect his consciousness. That he might come to grief in this environment is unthinkable. After all, it produced and educated him in order to guarantee its undisturbed continuation.

The second-order illiterate is the product of a new phase of industrialization. An economy whose problem is no longer production but

[illegible] lost its function. [illegible] disciplined reserve army of workers [illegible] training to which they were all [illegible] also becomes redundant, and literacy [illegible] better to be done away with [illegible] with the development of the [illegible] our technology has also developed [illegible] solution. The ideal medium for the second-order illiterate is television.

The educational policy of the state will have to [illegible] itself with the new priorities. By reducing the library budget, a first step has already been taken. And innovations are to be seen in school administration as well. You can go to school now for eight years without learning grammar, and even in the universities this Germanic dialect is gradually acquiring the status of a poorly mastered foreign language.

Please do not suppose that I would want to polemicize against a situation of whose inevitability I am fully aware. I desire only to portray and, as far as I can, explain it. It would be foolish to contest the second-order illiterate's *raison d'être*, and I am far from begrudging him his pleasures or his place in the sun.

On the other hand, it is safe to say that the project of the Enlightenment has failed. The slogan "Culture for Everyone" begins to sound comical. And a classless culture is even further from view. On the contrary: we can look forward to a situation in which cultural castes will become more and more distinct. But these castes can no longer be described by using the traditional Marxist model, according to which the ruling culture is the culture of the rulers. Indeed, the divergence between economic position and consciousness will continue to grow.

It will become the new rule to see second-order illiterates occupying the top positions in politics and business. In this connection, it is sufficient to indicate the current president of the United States and the current chancellor of the Federal Republic. On the other hand, you can easily find whole hordes of cabdrivers, newspaper hawkers, manual laborers, and welfare recipients whose thoughtfulness, cultural standards, and wide-ranging knowledge would have taken them far in any other society. But this kind of comparison falls short of portraying the true state of affairs, which admits of no clear analysis. For even among the unemployed you can find zombies; even in the presidential office there are people who can read and write and even think [illegible]. Finally, it also means that in [illegible] culture and [illegible] will become [illegible]. [illegible] privileges of education [illegible] their importance. In both parents as second-order illiterates, even the wellborn child [illegible] cultural caste will henceforth depend on person-

From all this I conclude that culture in our country has come into an entirely new situation. As for the perennial claim that culture provides a common denominator for all people—that we can simply forget. The rulers, mostly second-order illiterates, have lost all interest in it. As a result, culture cannot, and need not any longer, serve the interests of a ruling class. It no longer legitimates the social order. It has become useless—but there is a kind of freedom in that. Such a culture is thrown back on its own resources, and the sooner it realizes this, the better.

Where does all that leave the writer? For some time now it has not been a class privilege—or requirement—to be concerned with literature. The victory of the second-order illiterate can only radicalize literature. When it has lost its value as a status symbol, as a social code, as an educational program, then literature will be noticed only by those who can't do without it.

Whoever wants to can bemoan all this. I have no such desire. Weeds have always been a minority, and every city gardener knows how hard it is to do away with them. Literature will continue to thrive as long as it commands a certain agility, a certain cunning, a capacity for concentration, and a good memory. As you recall, these are the features of the true illiterate. Perhaps he will have the last word, since he requires no other media than a voice and an ear.

[Interview, December 1990]

A PUNT IS A PASS IS A KICK

From a radio interview with Gertrude Stein in the Fall 1990 issue of The Paris Review. *The interview, conducted by NBC reporter William Lundell, was broadcast on November 12, 1934. The transcript, which had never before been published, was discovered by Steven Moser in the Beinecke Library at Yale University.*

WILLIAM LUNDELL: Will you explain the passage from *Four Saints in Three Acts* about the pigeons on the grass that begins, "Pigeons on the grass alas. Pigeons on the grass alas. Short longer grass short longer longer shorter yellow grass," and ends up, "Lily Lily Lily let Lily Lucy Lucy let Lily. Let Lucy Lily."

GERTRUDE STEIN: That is simple I was walking in the gardens of the Luxembourg in Paris it was the end of summer the grass was yellow I was sorry that it was the end of summer and I saw the big fat pigeons in the yellow grass



Self-Portrait as Infanta with Fish, *by Julie Heffernan, seen on display last February at the annual Art Show of the Art Dealers Association of America in New York City.*

and I said to myself, pigeons on the yellow grass, alas, and I kept on writing pigeons on the grass, alas, short longer grass short longer longer shorter yellow grass pigeons large pigeons on the shorter longer yellow grass, alas pigeons on the grass, and I kept on writing until I had emptied myself of the emotion. If a mother is full of her emotion toward a child in the bath the mother will talk and talk and talk until the emotion is over and that's the way a writer is about an emotion.

LUNDELL: But how is the reader supposed to know what you are thinking about?

STEIN: The reader does know because he enjoys it. If you enjoy you understand if you understand you enjoy. What you mean by understanding is being able to turn it into other words but that is not necessary. To like a football game is to understand it in the football way.

LUNDELL: You saw the Yale-Dartmouth game a week ago Saturday, didn't you? Did you understand that in the American way or the football way or how?

STEIN: In the American way. The thing that interested me was that the Modern American in his movements and his actions in a football game so resembled the red Indian dance and it proves that the physical country that made the one made the other and that the red Indian is still with us. They just put their heads down solemnly together and then double over, while on the sidelines the substitutes move in a jiggly way just like Indians. Then they all get down on all fours just like Indians.



Ed Paschke, Nicky Hilderman, acrylic on fiberglass, at Feigen Contemporary in New York City

ly makes scratching protests on his old violin, which has become too large for him. Every license has had its success with him. Now he's barely a scab demanding infrequent nutrients. Bald as a beige croquet ball, he rolls his own.

They've fixed him up a mike with a cord into an ancient Silvertone amplifying box. Even his snore can be heard, slightly, out in the yard.

"Double Gramps, is it true that the old eat their young?"

"God damn, I'm old!" blasts over the kid, feedback piercing too. The old man faints, re-[illegible] into a codeine wither.

"But my question. Please, Double Gramps."

Almost accidentally, the old man hits bow to fiddle and scrawls out the grand trio of "Stars and Stripes Forever." Endlessly. It goes on the entire afternoon, amplifier picking up a prouder stroke here and there, screeching.

The kid grows up, a rock star, aging at twenty-three. He's already eating the young by the thousands when the second thought hits him.

[Outtakes, June 1984]

STUMPING FOR DEMOCRACY

From "A Visit with Nancy Reagan," in Christopher Street, *number 80. Darrell Yates Rist, a filmmaker, recorded the following scene during production of a film about American history for high school students. Mark is a White House media adviser. Bert is a personal assistant.*

NANCY [*Sighing heavily, arranges herself and begins*]: When you visit the White House, it's something like the landlord visiting the tenant, because the White House belongs to all the American people. Walking down these halls, I am almost overcome with history when I think that every president except George Washington lived here. But as the residents of the White House change, so does

the White House itself. Laundry, of course, doesn't have to dry in the East Room as it did in Abigail Adams's day. And Teddy Roosevelt's moose head no longer hangs on the State Dining Room wall staring down on distinguished guests. But whatever changes, the White House always maintains its dignity and symbolizes the continuity of our de-mocer-cy.

MARK: Cut. [*An explosion of anxious whispers.*]

NANCY: I didn't say *democracy*.

MARK: [*Soothingly*] *Democracy* is the only thing.

NANCY: [*Whining*]: *Democracy* I didn't do real well.

MARK: Can we just pick up . . . that was the only part I noticed.

NANCY: [*Distracted*]: What was that?

MARK: *Democracy*.

NANCY: *Democracy?*

MARK: It was nice till there.

BERT: *Nice*.

MARK: Back to the last line. Ready?

DARRELL: [*Loudly*]: First Lady, take two. [*A snap of the slate. Wincing.*]

NANCY: The White House always maintains its dignity and symbolizes the continuity of our democ'cy.

MARK: Cut.

NANCY: [*Giggling*]: Well, I . . . that *sound*! [*Bert laughs.*]

MARK: De-mo-cra-cy.

NANCY: [*Whimpering*]: Why did I do that?

BERT: That's fine, that's fine. It's *not* a big mistake.

MARK: Okay. Ready. Action.

NANCY: The White House always maintains its dignity and symbolizes the continuity of our democr'cy.

MARK: Cut. It's good enough.

BERT: [*To Nancy, laughing*]: Dear, it was very good.

[Guidelines, June 1985]

THE AYATOLLAH'S BOOK OF ETIQUETTE

From A Clarification of Questions, *by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, published in 1985 by the Westview Press. Khomeini's treatise sets out his position on 3,000 questions of everyday life. Translated by J. Borujerdi.*

64. EVACUATION IS UNLAWFUL IN FOUR places. First, in dead-end alleys. Second, on the property of a person who has not given his permission. Third, in a place assigned to a specific group of people, such as some schools. Fourth, over the graves of the faithful, [illegible] considered disrespectful.

107. The whole body of an infidel, except the hair, the nails, and its wetness, is unclean.

112. Industrial alcohol used for painting doors, tables, chairs, etc., is clean if one does not know it was made of something inebriating.

120. The sweat of a camel that eats unclean substances is unclean.

125. When a clean object touches an unclean object and one or both are wet enough to convey that wetness to the other, then the clean object becomes unclean. But if the wetness is not enough to reach the other, the clean object does not become unclean.

145. If a host, while eating, realizes that the food is unclean, he must inform his guests. But if one of the guests realizes this, it is not necessary to inform the others, unless his relations with the others are such that as a result of remaining silent he himself becomes unclean.

462. Divorcing a menstruating woman is void.

[Poem, July 1985]

CASUAL WEAR

By James Merrill. The poem subsequently appeared in Selected Poems 1946–1985, *published in 1992 by Alfred A. Knopf. Merrill died in 1995.*

Your average tourist: Fifty. 2.3
Times married. Dressed, this year, in Ferdi Plinthbower
Originals. Odds 1 to 9
Against her strolling past the Embassy

Today at noon. Your average terrorist
Twenty-five. Celibate. No use for trends,
At least in clothing. Mark, though, where it ends.
People have come forth, made of colored mist

Unsmiling on one hundred million screens
To tell of his prompt phone call to the station,
"Claiming responsibility"—devastation
Signed with a flourish, like the dead wife's jeans

2,054. These are the major abominable dealings. First, selling real estate. Second, butchery. Third, selling shrouds. Fourth, dealing with base people. Fifth, dealing between the morn[illegible] and the onset of sunshine. Sixth, [illegible] to be said sell wheat, barley, and the like as one's occupation. Seventh, entering [illegible] involving the purchase of a commodity that another person is about to buy.

[illegible] locusts caught with the hand or [illegible] other means is lawful after they are dead. It is not necessary that the person who caught them be a Moslem or that he mentioned the name of God when he caught them. But if a dead locust is held by an infidel and it is not known whether it was caught alive, it is not lawful to eat it, even if the person who caught it says that he caught it alive.

2,629. It is not unlawful to swallow the food that comes out from between the teeth as a result of flossing if one's nature has no aversion to it.

2,631. It is loathsome to eat the meat of a horse, a mule, or a donkey if someone has had coitus with the animal.

2,637. Several things are loathsome (abominable) when eating. First, eating while stunned. Second, excessive eating (it has been said that the Creator the World dislikes a full stomach more than anything else). Third, looking at other people's faces while they are eating. Fourth, eating hot food. Fifth, blowing at what one is eating or drinking. Sixth, waiting for something to enter the food has been put on the table cloth. Seventh, cutting bread with a knife. Eighth, putting bread under a container of food. Ninth, licking the meat stuck to a bone so that nothing remains on it. Tenth, peeling fruit.

[illegible] The price that banks give to encourage borrowers, and those that institutions give to encourage buyers and customers, are lawful. [illegible] that offers put inside their merchandise to attract customers and interest buyers, such as gold coins in boxes of shortening, are [illegible].

[illegible] not unlawful to remove [illegible] Moslem, severing that organ and grafting it are [illegible].

[Essay, March 1985]

INTERROGATOR AND DETAINEE

From The True Confessions of an Albino Terrorist, *by Breyten Breytenbach, published in February 1985 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Breytenbach, an Afrikaaner poet, served seven years in South African prisons for his antiapartheid activities. His most recent book is* Dog Heart: A Memoir.

THE DETAINEE AND THE INTERROGATOR both know that there is, obscurely, a measure of ritual involved in their relationship, a ritual as old as human intercourse. Perhaps because in a specific kind of power setup people will go through the moves in very similar ways. There are predictable reactions to objective conditions. The needs and the gestures and the effects of the relationship seem to be permanent. There is the struggle for domination—to have the other do what you want him to do. There is the effort to destroy—because the opposing forces are irreconcilable, or because of the pathological human curiosity for killing, for altering permanently, or just "to see." Or because the ritual has revealed either a brother-I, a mirror image, or only a miserable human pile of flesh and feces, which is unbearable and must be done away with.

And yet this twilight zone of jerking or being jerked according to the specifications of preordained roles, this macabre dance, this fatal game, should not obscure the fact that the situation and the steps and the rules are always personalized and localized and that in no way can the players be exonerated from their responsibilities. Knowing that human congress has always been sullied by this destructive and self-destructive *face-à-face* does not take away from the horror of it.

It must be repeated that the phenomenon is not indigenous only to certain countries or cultures or political systems. Africa knows it; you will encounter it in Chile and Vietnam and Italy and Russia and Northern Ireland—wherever there are political dissidents and "terrorists." Employed in the name of "security," the process, which involves the mutual destruction of human dignity, seems to be an integral part of most police and special agency methods. The really powerful reject these gutter ethics with their lips only. It would seem furthermore that there is no religion or structure of public mores strong enough to eradicate, or even to contain, the custom. Its virulence has nothing to do with backwardness or with ignorance;

more advanced technologies have merely brought a greater sophistication to the methods employed.

The interrogator will be someone who looks and behaves as is normal. He will lead an unremarkable family life. He is a doctor or a psychologist he will probably also have a mundane practice to look after. He will be Mr. Everyman. These people are not monsters. They have no reason to feel ill at ease in society, on the contrary, they know that they are tolerated and accepted by the powerful. They may even fondly believe that they are implicitly supported by the so-called silent majority. They at most consider theirs to be "a necessary if dirty job." Obviously they have to *simulate* their normality. What happens in bare rooms where all time has been twisted is not just dirty work—it is the heart-rending flowering of evil, and it will profoundly modify all the actors.

This much you, the detainee, will know in advance: that the interrogator has at his disposal a panoply of powers, which include the "right" and the willingness to kill you (it is signaled clearly: not for nothing have well over seventy South Africans been done to death in cells by the security forces over the last decade); the "right" and the desire to maim you, because you must be destroyed; the "right" to manipulate and to circumscribe your environment—physical and mental—in terms of food, space, isolation from and contact with the world, family pressure, privileges offered or withdrawn; the "right" to mold time—he regulates it, he plays with it, he has an unlimited amount at his disposal. The interrogator's power is absolute; the fact that the detainee knows it is the interrogator's most efficacious weapon, but ultimately it rots him utterly.

The prisoner will inevitably end up confessing. There can be no doubt about that. His only leeway is to hold out, desperately, for time. He may have to decide *when* to let go safely, how long he can hold out, how many false confessions he can make before cracking, how to remain *conscious* (if not sane) in the coils of his inventions and his lies and his hallucinations. He will be raped. His problem is to realize it, to handle it, and to know that it is the humanity he shares with the aggressor that is being raped. He must also realize that the damage done is permanent.

The self-disgust of the prisoner comes from the alienation he has been brought to. That in which he participated—for he is forced to participate in his own undoing—will play havoc with his conception of himself, and it will forever modulate his contact with other people. He will have the leftover knowledge that he was used as a tool, that he was coldly and expertly manipulated [illegible]

The two [illegible] are inextricably linked forever [illegible] the obscenity [illegible] by the sad knowledge [illegible] ble of. We are all guilty.

To reduce a person to a weakness of babbling, to confuse [illegible] his humiliation polished [illegible] spectacle that affects the [illegible] abasement that cannot [illegible] fragile. It is not difficult to bring out the worst in man. Respect and dignity are matters of make-believe. We need to maintain these illusions if we intend to [illegible]

With the struggle for freedom intensifying, as it is bound to, there is not the [illegible]

[Commentary, October 1985]

LESSONS OF DARKNESS

From Paul Lawrence [illegible]
[illegible] by [illegible]
World News Tonight

The [illegible] bomb are almost over. Japan's Prime Minister Nakasone has just spoken to the crowd, telling them again, I [illegible] image of what war can cost in their minds. And not far from where we stand, a peace bell, which you may [illegible] all over the world to ring.

Those people who [illegible] but they really [illegible] ideology. There was scarcely a crime the Japanese had not committed in their drive to conquer the world. Today's Japanese are uncompromising in their [illegible] over committed [illegible] the Japanese, Hiroshima was a terrible [illegible]

and the determination and the intelligence of the minority in power and of their executants.

[Interrogation, June 1985]

CONFESSIONS OF A STATE TERRORIST

publications in Chile. Before the interview could be published, however, General Pinochet imposed a

new]

Why did it shock you?

I had never seen anything like that before. I was among the strong guards, but . . . they took her to [illegible] and they beat the hell out of her. I saw them.

How did Contreras Maluje's death really happen? [Maluje, a high-ranking official in Chile's Communist Party, was abducted in 1975.]

He was handed over to us by a man who had been arrested. I don't remember what position this man held. We called him "Jose." He was important among the Juventud Comunista [Communist Youth].

What happened to Maluje?

I remember this mission quite well, because I participated in it. We arrested him along with a relative or friend of his in San Bernardo. We brought along "Jose," who was still under arrest. By then we had arrested practically all the members of the Juventud Comunista, except Maluje.

When we interrogated "Jose," he told us that Contreras Maluje was in a house in San Bernardo. He said, "If you let me go, I'll make contact with him and you can arrest him."

It was very difficult to arrest Maluje. He was [illegible]. We took him blindfolded to our headquarters and interrogated him about the other men we had arrested. He refused to talk about them and said he had not seen them in a long time. We took off his blindfold and he saw all the men. I think he realized right away that "Jose" had given him away. Then he told [illegible] as a high-ranking communist as all. So we [illegible]. We all discussed this—knowing Maluje's importance in the Communist Party, we were afraid that he might be plotting something.

We decided to let him go and to follow him. He started walking toward Avenida Matta and we trailed him at a distance in a car. Then we heard on the radio that someone had jumped in front of a bus. We rushed to the scene and found that a big crowd had already gathered around him.

[illegible] the night before [illegible]. When he saw us he [illegible] DINA and

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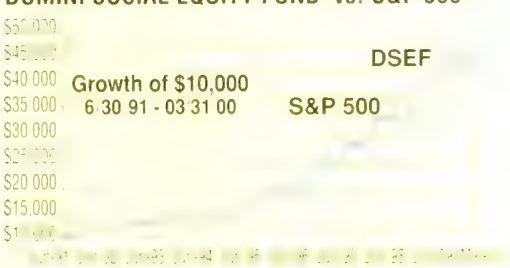
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ADHA

CHERNOBYL: THE GOURMET ANGLE



Temma on Earth, *a painting by Jim Leach. Leach's work will be on display in November at the Lexington Public Library.*

with that clinic. I was treated by a psychiatrist.

Were you asked about these same subjects?
No, because the doctor belongs to the intelligence service. I asked for medical help because I was feeling extremely tense. I talked to a psychologist, who sent me to have an encephalogram. I had several sessions, just conversations. I was also asked to solve some puzzles, organize cubes, etc. They decided that my problems were a consequence of my financial situation.

How did you feel after your treatment?
I still had the same problems, but I felt fine. What I mean is that I realized that the problems are within me. That is why I decided to talk to you.

Why didn't you talk to the doctor about this?
I couldn't talk to him about this! How was I supposed to tell him that I was fed up and wanted to leave the service? How could I have told him that I felt filthy and was nauseated by what I was doing? Can you imagine? The doctor works for the service. I would have had a very short life.

How do you behave as a father?
I am a bad father.

Do you hit your children?
No, but I hardly ever play with them.

Why?
I don't know. I've been looking at my life for a long time ... I see things differently now, and I have analyzed what I have done. I don't want my children to love me. I know I will be killed any day, and I don't want them to suffer. That's why I behave the way I do in my house. My kids love their uncles more. When they visit, the children run out to greet them ... Sometimes they do that when I arrive, but I don't pay any attention to them. I know I love them, but not the way I should.

What did you do when you weren't working?
I didn't enjoy being at home. I read a lot. I still enjoy reading. I used to play soccer, but I stopped going to the stadium.

you were little?'

would you like your kids to be when they grow up?'

and participated in these activities, how did you

hum we would break down, but not him.

you only feel sad. You feel a knot in your throat

not wanting to . . . but wanting to, you start get-

are doing.

[*Conjunction*, January 1984]

GLENN GOULD ON THE MENACE OF ART

and published by Alfred A. Knopf. The excerpt below is from "Glenn Gould Interviews Glenn Gould About Glenn Gould," originally

Mr. Gould, are you saying that you do not

as best I can to make only moral judgments

Why battleship gray?

It's not to my color

Is another reference color relevant?

Hear what you're saying. Now then, let's suppose for the sake of argument that without warning one individual elected to paint his house fire-engine red—

—thereby challenging the symmetry of the town planning?

Yes, it would probably do that too, but you're approaching the question from an aesthetic point of view. The real consequence of his action would be to foreshadow an outbreak of *manic* activity in the town and almost inevitably—since other houses would be painted in similarly garish hues—to encourage a climate of competition and, as a corollary, of violence.

I gather, then, that red in your color lexicon represents aggressive behavior.

I should have thought there'd be general agreement on that. But as I said, there would be an aesthetic/moral overlap at this point. The man who painted the first house may have done so purely out of an aesthetic preference, and it would, to use an old-fashioned word, be "sinful" if I were to take him to account in respect of his taste. Such an accounting would conceivably inhibit all subsequent judgments on his part. But if I were able to persuade him that his particular aesthetic indulgence represented a moral danger to the community as a whole, and providing I could muster a vocabulary appropriate to the task—which would not be, obviously, a vocabulary of aesthetic standards—then that would, I think, be my responsibility.

g.g.: You do realize, of course, that you're beginning to talk like a character out of Orwell?

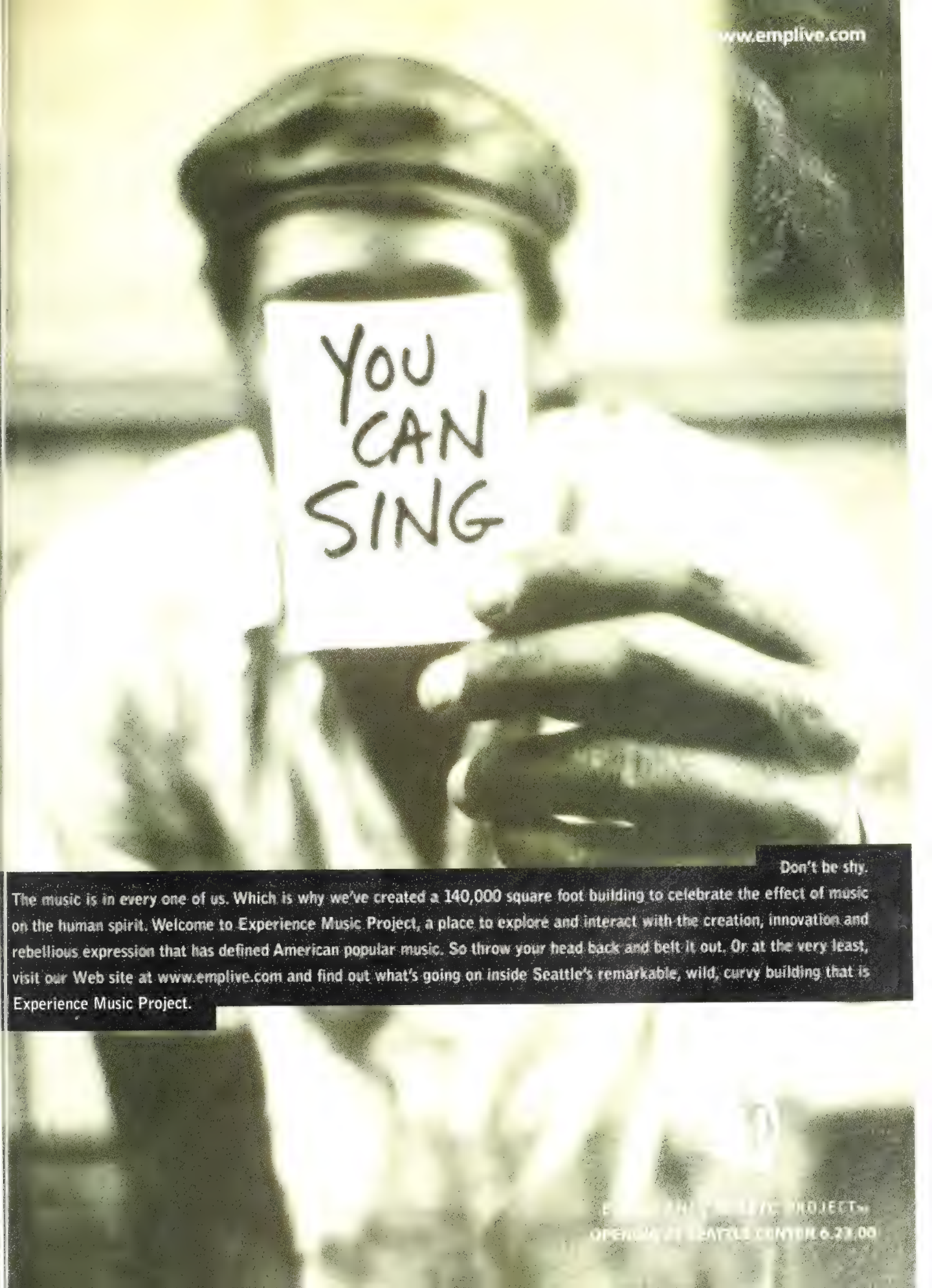
G.G.: Oh, the Orwellian world holds no particular terrors for me.

And you also realize that you're defining and defending a type of censorship that contradicts the whole post-Renaissance tradition of Western thought?

G.G.: Certainly. It's the post-Renaissance tradition that has brought the Western world to the brink of destruction. You know, this odd attachment to freedom of movement, freedom of speech, and so on is a peculiarly Occidental phenomenon. It's all part of the Occidental notion that one can successfully separate word and deed.

g.g.: The sticks-and-stones syndrome, you mean?

Precisely. There's some evidence for the fact that—well, as a matter of fact, McLuhan [illegible] just that in the *Gutenberg Galaxy*—that preliterate peoples or minimal


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ly literate people are much less willing to commit that [illegible].

[illegible] also the ethical injunction that to will evil is to accomplish evil.

[illegible] only culture that, by accident or good management, bypassed the Renaissance [illegible] the menace it really is.

May I assume the U.S.S.R. would qualify?

Absolutely. The Soviets are a bit rough-hewn as to method, I'll admit, but their concerns are absolutely justified.

So you wouldn't vouch for the art as technique-pure-and-simple theories of Stravinsky, for instance?

Certainly not. That's quite literally the last thing art is.

g.g.: Then what about the art-as-violence-surrogate theory?

G.G.: I don't believe in surrogates; they're simply the playthings of minds resistant to the perfectibility of man. Besides, if you're looking for violence surrogates, genetic engineers are better bet.

g.g.: How about the art-as-transcendental-experience theory?

G.G.: Of the three you've cited, that's the only one that attracts.

g.g.: Do you have a theory of your own, then?

G.G.: Yes, but you're not going to like it.

g.g.: I'm braced.

Well, I feel that art should be given the chance to phase itself out. I think that we must accept the fact that art is not inevitably benign, that it is potentially destructive. We should analyze the areas where it tends to do [illegible] use them as guidelines and build into art a component that will enable it to preside over its own obsolescence.

[illegible]

Because you know, the protest [illegible] experiments [illegible] something which you've enumerated—are not without analogy to the ban-the-bomb movement of half [illegible] moments.

[illegible] respect protest [illegible] Hitler.

No, but since I haven't noticed a single [illegible] [illegible] from those movement, I can't *join* it, either. You see, the Western world is consumed with notions of [illegible] the threat of modern [illegible] dull the senses and the loss [illegible] And until the two phenomena are recognized as one, indivisible, until physical and verbal aggression [illegible] imply [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] I'll continue to listen to the Berlin Philharmonic from [illegible]

[Transcript, July 1992]

TOUCH OF EGO

From Orson Welles, Actor, Auteur, Cops, writer's verbatim transcript of recording session for a television commercial voice-over, in the Winter 1992 issue of DIS: Southeastern Culture Quarterly, *published in Tallahassee, Florida. Welles died in 1985.*

[illegible] [*Reading copy*]. "We know a remote farm in Lincolnshire where Mrs. Buckley lives. Every July, peas grow there." Do you really mean that?

[illegible] Uh, yeah.

WELLES: Don't you think you really want to say "July" over the pictures of snow? Isn't that the fun of it?

PRODUCER: Try "in July."

WELLES: I don't understand you.

PRODUCER: And can you emphasize a bit the "in"—*in* July?

WELLES: Why? That doesn't make any sense. Sorry. There's no known way of saying an English sentence in which you begin a sentence with "in" and emphasize it. Get me a jury and show me how you can say "*in* July" and I'll go down on you. That's just idiotic, if you'll forgive me for saying so. It's just stupid. "*In* July"! Impossible. Meaningless.

◆

WELLES [*Reading copy*]: "We know a certain fjord in Norway near where the cod gather in great shoals. There, Yonster, Stenglin . . ." Shit.

PRODUCER: A fraction more on that shoals thing, 'cause you rolled it around very nicely.

WELLES: Yeah, roll it around. And I have no more time. You don't know what I'm up against. This is a very wearying one; it's unpleasant to read. Unrewarding. "Because Finders trees the cod at sea and then add a crumb-crisp co— crumb-crisp coating." Ah. That's tough. "Crumb-crisp coating"— No. You need to break it up. It's not written conversationally.

PRODUCER: Take "crumb" out.

WELLES: What?

[illegible] Take "crumb" out.

[illegible] Take "crumb" out. Good . . .

◆

[illegible]s: Here, under protest, is "beef burgers." "We know a little place in the American Far West where Charlie Briggs chops up the finest prairie-fed beef and tastes . . ." This is a lot of shit, you know that? You want one more? More beef?

PRODUCER: You missed the first "beef," actually.
WELLES: What do you mean, missed it?
PRODUCER: You were emphasizing "prairie-fed."
WELLES: But you can't emphasize "beef." That's like you wanting me to emphasize "in" before "July." Come on, fellas, you're losing your heads. I wouldn't direct any living actor like this in Shakespeare, the way you do this. It's impossible.
PRODUCER: Orson, you did six of these last year, and they were far and away the best, and I know the reason.
WELLES: The right reading for this is the one I'm giving it. I've spent twenty times longer reading for you people than for any other commercial I've ever made. You are such pests. What is it you want? In the depths of your ignorance, what is it you want?
PRODUCER: That was absolutely fine. It really was.
WELLES: You know, you're, you— No amount of money is worth this. [*Welles leaves.*]

[Disclosure, May 1992]

A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

From Mark Twain: Collected Stories, Sketches, Speeches, and Essays, *a two-volume collection of Twain's work edited by Louis J. Budd and published in October 1992 by the Library of America. This essay was first published in the* New York Evening Post *on June 9, 1879.*

I HAVE PRETTY MUCH MADE UP MY mind to run for President. What the country wants is a candidate who cannot be injured by investigation of his past history, so that the enemies of the party will be unable to rake up anything against him that nobody ever heard of before. If you know the worst about a candidate, to begin with, every attempt to spring things on him will be checkmated. Now I am going to enter the field with an open record. I am going to own up in advance to all the wickedness I have done, and if any Congressional committee is disposed to prowl around my biography in the hope of discovering any dark and deadly deed that I have secreted, why—let it prowl.

In the first place, I admit that I treed a thematic grandfather of mine in the winter of 1850. He was old and inexpert in climbing trees, but with the heartless brutality that is characteristic of me I ran him out of the front [illegible] at the point of a hot [illegible], and cursed him to lewd up a crazy tree, where he remained all night, while I emptied shot into his legs. I did this because he stole [illegible]. I will do it again if I ever have another grand-

[Outtakes, February 1993]

THE NUTTY PROMOTERS

From the transcript of a recording session for advertisements for The Caddy, *a movie starring Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis that was released in 1953. The transcript appeared in the fall 1992 issue of* DIS: Southeastern Culture Quarterly, *published in Tallahassee, Florida.*

DEAN MARTIN: Hi, everybody. This is Dean Martin . . .
JERRY LEWIS: . . . and Jerry Lewis.
MARTIN: We'd like to tell you about our latest and funniest picture from Paramount.
LEWIS: Of course, you mean *The Caddy*.
MARTIN: You'll love Jerry and me in *The Caddy*.
LEWIS: Take my word for it, *The Caddy* is the most hilarious picture we've ever made. C'mon, join in the fun. See Paramount's *The Caddy*.
MARTIN: Yeah, *The Caddy* . . . Was that all right, you cocksuckers?
LEWIS: How was that, you shithead?

MARTIN: This is Dean Martin . . .
LEWIS: . . . and Jerry Lewis with a reminder to see our newest and funniest movie ever, *The Caddy*.
MARTIN: Oh, he's right, folks. C'mon and join in the fun of the most riotuous ninety minutes of howls.
LEWIS: "Riotuous"? Where the fuck do you see "riotuous"? That's *riotous*, you greaseball!

MARTIN: This is Dean Martin . . .
LEWIS: . . . and Jerry Lewis with a reminder to see our newest and funniest motion picture ever, *The Caddy*.
MARTIN: Oh, he's right, folks. C'mon and join in the fun with the most wonderful ninety minutes of howls and gags you ever saw.
LEWIS: We'll be seeing you in *The Caddy*.
MARTIN: Yes, *The Caddy*.
LEWIS: With a big cock on it.

WORD PERFECT

A



The Discovery of Painting, *by Attila Richard Lukacs. The painting is on display in* Apes & the Primal Eye

[Fiction, March 1986]

CHILDREN OF THE WIND

By Primo Levi, in Granta, *number 16. Levi, a chemist and novelist, is the author of many books, including* The Periodic Table, If This Is a Man, *and* If Not Now, When? *Translated by Simon Rees and Antonio Tanca. Levi died in 1987.*

IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT THE ISLANDS of the Wind (Mahuu and Kaenuuu) will be excluded from the tourist circuit for as long as possible. It would not be easy to develop them, in any case, the soil is so rough that it would be impossible to build an airport, and nothing larger than a rowboat can come close to their shores. Water is scarce, in some years totally lacking; the islands have therefore never supported any permanent human settlement. Nevertheless, Polynesian crews have landed there several times, perhaps even in the remote past, and a Japanese detachment stayed for a few months during the last war. The last human vestige to be found on the islands can be traced back to this fleeting presence: on the highest point of Mahuu, a modest but steep ridge about one hundred meters high, are the ruins of a tiny stone antiaircraft bunker. It may never have fired a shot: we have not found a single shell in its vicinity. On Kaenuuu we found a whip weeks between two boulders, a vestige of some inexplicable violence.

ment and is covered instead with minute pores which are branched and bushy so that the sperm can be carried remarkable distances by the wind. On our return journey, we collected some 130 miles from the islands, and to all appearances the sperm was alive and fertile.

During seminal emission, the *atoula* stay still, bolt upright on their haunches, with their forearms folded, shaken by a light tremor that may have the function of speeding up the evaporation of the seminal fluid from the tireless surface of the belly. When the wind suddenly changes (a frequent event in these latitudes), the spectacle of countless [illegible] each upright on his eminence, all turning simultaneously in the new direction like the weather vanes formerly placed on rooftops, is quite remarkable. They seem concentrated and tense and do not react to stimuli: this kind of behavior is explicable only if one remembers that these animals are not threatened by any predator that would otherwise easily overcome them. Even the Malayan hunters respect them—according to some, because an ancient tradition holds them sacred to Hatola, the wind god, from whom the *atoula* actually derive their name; according to others, it is simply because at this period their flesh would provoke an unspecified intestinal complaint.

In the season of dissemination, the laxity of the males contrasts with the extreme mobility of the females. Guided by sight and smell, they move quickly and restlessly from one [illegible] to another on the moor; they do not try to approach the males or climb, as the males do, to the highest places. They seem to be looking for a position in which they can best be exposed to the invisible spray of sperm and when they think they have found it, they stop there, spinning voluptuously, but not for more than a few minutes: they suddenly dart off with a rapid leap and resume their dance up and down on the rocks and the moor. During this period the entire [illegible] is filled with the orange and violet [illegible] and the wind is charged with [illegible] stimulating, and inebriating [illegible] which draws all the animals on the island into an endless round-dance. They fly up screaming and wheel round in circles, turning toward the sea like mad things, and then themselves drop like [illegible] which, tiny nimble [illegible] can normally be spotted only on the highest [illegible] or hiding dazed [illegible] in the splendor of the sun, and [illegible] with one's hands; even the [illegible] of these days as if bullets

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THE WHITE BIRD

F

the wood has the maximum flexibility, then you can give them a shape which will be the best for the body with a minimum of effort. The second piece will represent the wings. He starts immediately explaining the making of the wings and tail feathers. The whole block of wood for the wings is carved according to the silhouette of a single feather. Then the block is sliced into thirteen thin layers and these are carefully opened out, each one to make a thin shape. The two pieces of wood are joined together to form a cross and the bird is complete. No glue is used and there is only one nail where the two pieces of wood cross. Very light, weighing only two or three ounces, the birds are usually hung on a thread from a motor-driven ceiling fan so that they move with the air currents.

It would be ridiculous to compare one of these birds to a Van Gogh self-portrait or a Rembrandt crucifixion. They are simple, homemade objects, worked according to a traditional pattern. Yet, by their very simplicity, they allow us to categorize the qualities that make them pleasing and mysterious to everyone who sees them.

First, there is a figurative representation. One is looking at a bird, more precisely a bird apparently hanging in midair. Thus, there is a reference to the surrounding world of nature. Second, the choice of subject (involving bird and the context in which it is placed) carries, when birds are added, certain symbolic. This primary symbolism then joins a more general, cultural one (birds, and birds in particular, have been enriched with symbolic meanings in every variety of cultures).

Third, there is a respect for the material used. The wood has been tamed, becoming more supple, more of a lightness, probably more fragile. Looking at it, one is aware of how well it was worked. Fourth, there is a sense of unity and economy. Despite the object's apparent complexity, the impression one receives is simple, even austere. Its richness is a result of repetitions which are also variations. Fifth, this man-made object provokes a kind of astonishment: how can such a thing be made? I have given rough indications above, but anyone unfamiliar with the technique wants to take the object in his hands and examine it closely to discover the secret that has guided its making.

These qualities, when perceived as a whole, provoke at least a momentary sense of being before an object which is finished, which is a work that has become itself, which is independent of us and that is somehow more than us. Suddenly one is looking at something that has been worked with a mysterious skill and a kind of love.

Thus far I have tried to isolate the qualities of the white bird that provoke an aesthetic emotion. (The word "emotion," although des-

[illegible]

[illegible], September [illegible]

A WRITER'S GIFT

[illegible]

[illegible] Miller [illegible]

[illegible]

three boxfriends to help me with him and [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Miller.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

ty, to a bigger place. The patients were help-

[illegible]

a funny sight for Mr. Miller, especially since [illegible] supposed to take [illegible] patients from Jackson to across the river. It [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

their own beds out and putting them in a truck and driving away. Don't you like that?

[illegible]

[illegible]

man-made object but with the nature into which it is born.

[illegible] sentimental view of nature. Nature is thought [illegible] have known better. Nature is energy and struggle. It is what exists without any promise. [illegible] which lends itself as much to evil as to good. Its energy is totally indifferent. The first necessity of life is shelter. Shelter against nature. The first prayer is for protection. The first sign of life is pain. If the Creation was purposeful, its purpose is a hidden one which can only be discovered intuitively within terms never by the evidence of what happens.

It is within this bleak natural context that beauty is encountered, and the encounter is by instinct sudden and unpredictable. The gale blows itself out, the sea changes from the color of [illegible] the shantytown the moon rises. I offer dramatic examples [illegible] the context. Reflect upon more everyday examples. However it is encountered, beauty is always an exception, always *in despite of*. This is [illegible]

It can be argued that the origin of the way we perceive natural beauty was instinctual. Flowers are a promise of fertility, a sunset is a reminder of fire and warmth, moonlight makes the night less dark, the bright colors of a bird's [illegible] stimulus. Yet such an argument is too reductive. I believe [illegible] therefore, [illegible] further.

[illegible] and [illegible] Dependent upon [illegible] Within modern class societies there are complex ideological determinations: we know, [illegible] challenge to the initiative of the living.

[illegible] birds, animals, the moon, running water [illegible]

evolution of human perception have contended to produce the phenomenon of a potential [illegible] and what we can see. And by contrast to the geometric meet at a point of affirmation. This point, this coincidence, is [illegible] and affirmed and, at the same time, the seer is affirmed by what he sees. For a brief instant one stands [illegible] without the pretensions of a creator in the position of God in the first chapter of Genesis. And he saw that it was good. The aesthetic emotion before nature derives, I believe, from this double affirmation.

Yet we do not live in the first chapter of Genesis. We live as if one follows the biblical sequence of events—after the Fall. In any case, we live in a world of suffering in which evil is rampant, a world whose events do not confirm our Being, a world that has to be resisted. It is in this situation that the aesthetic moment offers hope. That we find a crystal or a poppy beautiful means that we are less alone, that we are more deeply inserted into existence than the course of a single life would lead us to believe. I try to describe as accurately as possible the experience in question, my starting point is phenomenological, not deductive; its form, perceived as such, becomes a message that one receives but cannot translate because, in it, all is instantaneous. For in an instant, the energy of one's perception becomes inseparable from the energy of the Creation.

The aesthetic emotion we feel before a man-made object—such is the white bird with which I started—is derivative of the emotion we feel before nature. The white bird is an attempt to translate a message received from a real bird. All the languages of art have been developed in attempts to transform the instantaneous into the permanent. Art supposes that [illegible] is not an exception—is not *in despite of*—but is the basis for wonder.

Several years ago, when considering the historical face of art, I wrote that I judged a work according to whether or not it helped men in the modern world claim their social rights. I hold to that. Art's other, transcendental face raises the question of man's ontological right.

[illegible] is the mirror of nature is one that appeals only in periods of skepticism. Art does not imitate nature, it imitates a creation, sometimes to propose an alternative world, sometimes simply to amplify, to confirm, [illegible] objects selected by nature. Art is an organized response to what nature allows us to glimpse occasionally. Art sets out to transform the potential recognition into an unconditional [illegible] in the hope of [illegible] the transcendental face of art is always a form of prayer.



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A MUSEUM OF SECRET AFFINITIES

which had been assigned me. Feeling my way

behind it. I knew at once it was white. Firm and

I know that at that moment I recovered the ele-

Raymundo Lulio Street in Mallorca.

Emerson said that language is fossil poetry.

nfirmation of this dictum, we need only remember that all abstract words are, in effect, metaphors, including the word *metaphor*, which in Greek means "transfer."

The thirteenth century, which produced the cult of Scripture—that is, of a text of words elected and approved by the Spirit—could not think in a metaphorical manner. A man of genius, Raymundo Lulio (Lull), who had attributed exemplary prudence to God (goodness, greatness, eternity, power, wisdom, will, virtue, and glory), conceived a sort of mechanical thinking, made up of concentric circles on wood covered with a shell of the divine predicates. This mechanism, set in motion by the systematic investigator, would yield an indeterminate and almost infinite number of concepts of a theological order. He did the same as regards the faculties of the soul and the qualities of everything in the world. It was to be expected, all these combinatory mechanisms served no purpose whatsoever.

Centuries later, Jonathan Swift mocked Lull in *Gulliver's Travels*. Leibniz considered the matter but abstained, naturally, from reconstructing the method.

The experimental science prophesied by Francis Bacon has now given us calculators, which has allowed man to set foot on the moon and whose computers are—if the phrase is acceptable—belated sisters of Lull's ambitious circles.

Mauthner observes that a dictionary of rhymes is also a machine-for-thinking.

On Salvation by Books.—One autumn, one of the autumns of time, the Shinto divinities gathered, not for the first time, at Izumo. They are said to have numbered eight million. Being a shy man, I would have felt lost among so many. In any case, it is not convenient to deal in inconceivable numbers. Let us say there were eight, since eight is a good omen in these islands.

They were downcast, but did not show it: the virtues of divinities are unalterable. *Vide Kant*. They seated themselves in a circle on the green crest of a hill. They had been observing mankind from their firmament or from a stone or from a snowflake.

One of the divinities spoke:

> Many centuries have gone by since we gathered here to create Japan and the world. The tribes that were the ever-changing past the road by the meadow of plum trees and named Jizo still walk. But still, so that men should not be burdened with too many things, we gave them necessary gifts: the plural, Jizo and the stumbling block. We also bestowed on them the gift of experimenting with certain variations. This is continuous repeating. Endless. But men have not ceased to create new gods. The last that I did was Jesus. He had a short success. He left behind Him a few parables and a cross, which is a good instrument for torture. Before this senseless god, let us not repeat our mistake.

They returned pensive. With [illegible] divinity, gods.

[illegible]

The divinities entered them. They were in an unknown language, and I could not understand them. The kidnapped divinity delivered [illegible]

[illegible]

Thus, because of a haiku, the human race was saved.

[Poem, January 1986]

PREPARATION

To Carlos Luis Muñoz from Quintana del Castillo, published in Poesía by the Poet Pedro Muñoz Seca, author of many books and children. Bellini Winter in Red Side Dog *In 1986 he received the Nobel Prize for Literature.*

Still one more year of preparation
Tomorrow at the latest I'll start working on a great book
In which my century will appear as it really was.
The sun will rise over the righteous and the wicked
Springs and autumns will unerringly return,
In every thicket a thrush will build his nest lined with clay
And foxes will learn their foxy natures.

And that will be the subject, with added [illegible]
Memories
Running across treetop plains, shouting in verse
In a many-voiced chorus; the cannon of a tank
Crowns the immense at the corner of a street, the ride at dusk
Interrupted with watchtowers and barbed wire.

No it won't happen tomorrow. In five or ten years.
I still think too much about the mother
And ask what is man born of woman.
He curls himself up and protects his head
While he is kicked by heavy boots, on the end running,
He burns with bright flames, a hill keeps him into a clay pit.
Her child. Enlightenment already begins to [illegible]
in vitro.

I haven't learned yet to speak as I should, calmly.

"At just about the time this reviewer was putting on a black suit to attend the funeral of American fiction,

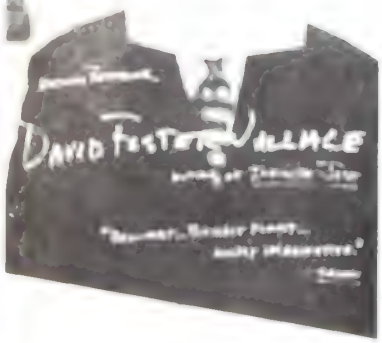
David Foster Wallace

showed up." —Andrei Codrescu, *Chicago Tribune*

"Brutally magnificent." —[illegible]

"A supersonic delight." —*L.A. Weekly*

[illegible] Now in Paperback





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— Andrea Barrett, author of *Ship Fever* and *The Voyage of the Narwhal*

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Little, Brown and Company

BACK BAY

[illegible]

HAZARDS OF NEW FORTUNE

Harper's Magazine, *then and now*

BY LEWIS H. LAPHAM

The [illegible] publishing company that by 1850 had become the largest [illegible] printing and publishing establishment in Manhattan, a force of several hundred people employed in the various printing trades), but it wouldn't have occurred to them to think that [illegible] literary movement. Frugal merchants and devout, side-whiskered Methodists, they had been successful booksellers for thirty years, the enterprise derived from the [illegible] James, who had rowed across the East River in 1810 and, at the age of sixteen, in what was still a small and predominantly maritime city found work as a printer's apprentice. Seven years later he set up his own printing establishment and was promptly [illegible] by his three younger brothers, John, Joseph Wesley, and Fletcher. The business prospered, the brothers acquired wealth and reputation, and in 1844 James was elected mayor of what had become a gaslit metropolis inhabited by 300,000 people, the cobblestoned streets choked with the clatter of horses and wagons, the ships in the rivers crowding so close to the piers that their bowsprits poke [illegible] against the upper windows of the waterfront taverns. Mayor Harper equipped the police with their first uniforms—notable for the copper buttons that gave currency to the term "cops"—and restricted the wandering of pigs (on which the city had depended to dispose of its refuse) to the alleys west of Fifth Avenue.

By 1850 the city's population had [illegible] in size, the residential districts spreading north toward Forty-second Street, the traffic on lower [illegible] Broadway prompting the British author William Makepeace Thackeray to remark on "a rush of life, such as I have never seen." In the excitement of what was perceived by all present as an era of immense promise, the Harper brothers conceived of their new magazine as a commercial opportunity and "a tender to our business," meant to drum up buyers for their books and occupy the [illegible] steam press recently installed in their factory on Franklin Square. Fletcher Harper, the most literary of the four [illegible] and [illegible] years later that "the atmosphere of the place did not suggest any [illegible] aesthetic refinement."

Southerners [illegible] their places in America [illegible] 1850 "was [illegible] city, boasted the comforts [illegible] sixteen first-class hotels, but at least half of th [illegible] gentlemen [illegible] still [illegible] their food in their fingers and eating with their knives. A all points of the American compass the invento [illegible] Daniel Webster referred to "the cr ators of this world—after God" were busy ti kering with plows and motors and firing pins; th country was turning on its axis, the lines [illegible] mu munication and trade beginning to run east an west instead of north and south, and the old me cantile arrangements familiar to the dealers i rum and slaves being replaced by a commerc geared to the dynamo of the Industrial Revol tion. Gold had been found in California, an victory in the war with Mexico had brought wit it a new territory nearly as large as the one a quired in the Louisiana Purchase; banks were ri ing up on New York City street corners "like A addin palaces," the American steamer *Pacific* s a new record for a trans-Atlantic crossing (te days, four hours, thirty minutes), and land c the frontier was still plentiful and "dog cheap The travelers making their way west on the Or gon Trail—the vast caravan numbering as ma as 42,000 immigrants in 1849—looked for a ga den in a landscape that was mostly desert, f something glimpsed but not yet seen in a play sunlight on a canyon wall or through a drift of ra in tall trees. The Indians on the Great Plain were still peaceable enough in the spring of 185 more curious than belligerent, watching, in silen and from a distance, as the white man move what they assumed were his villages to huntin grounds unknown.

The curtain was going up on a brave ne world, but where did one look first, and wh was the perspective that offered the cleare view? Harper & Brothers answered the questi with a "compendium" for those of their cu tomers who didn't have time to read throug "scores and hundreds of magazines and journal intermingled with much that is of merely loc and transient interest, and are thus hopelessly e cluded from the knowledge and the reach readers at large." Expressing the wish "to rem dy this evil," the advertisement on the first pa of the first volume of *Harper's New Monthly Ma azine* offered to place "within the reach of th [illegible] American people, in immen

1850



Fugitive Slave Act passed



President Buchanan and Queen Victoria exchange first trans-Atlantic telegraphs

John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry

1852 1854 1856 1858 1859





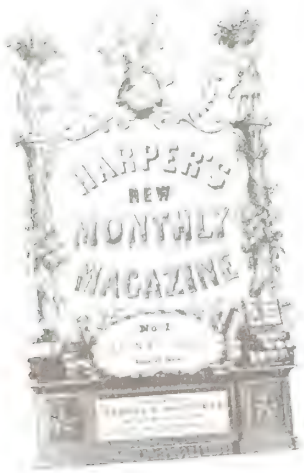




sount of useful information to edu- , to which is appended the most numerous pense of the reader and periodical in whatever ingenuity appears to have hitherto had no cess." A few pages later, under the rubric "A and at the State," the publishers framed the ngument as a moment of general education:

> The Weekly and Daily journals of England, France and America . . . dump in the most full-handed manner every department of useful knowledge. The progress of arts, discoveries in agriculture, public documents, etc. etc. are regularly furnished. Congress, Senate, Legislature, Meetings, Conventions, Elections, Fairs, Anniversaries, Societies, Institutions, Lectures, Inventions, Improvements, Markets, Trade, Commerce, Manufactures, Mechanics, Agriculture, Education, Internal Improvements, Rail Roads, Canals, Steamboats, Packets, Ships, Sailing, Arrivals, Departures, Foreign Intelligence, Domestic Intelligence, Literature, Science, Religion, Morality, Amusements, Fashions, Deaths, Marriages, Births, Accidents, Offences, Punishments, Executions, Duels, Robberies, Murders, Piracies, Forgeries, Frauds, Riots, Insurrections, Conflagrations, Inundations, Storms, Hurricanes, Earthquakes, Famines, Plagues, Pestilences, Epidemics, Casualties, Calamities, Judicial Proceedings, Political Movements, Revolutions, Wars, Battles, Sieges, Victories, Defeats, Negotiations, Treaties, Armistices, Capitulations, Surrenders, Conquests, Annexations, Colonization, Emigration, Population, Statistics, Finance, Banking, Currency, Exchange, Stocks, Bonds, Insurance

ries from *Household Words* (the journal edited by [illegible] Dickens) [illegible] Ainsworth (he had died in April), the *London* [illegible] tions appeared at the back of the magazine, in the [illegible] Raymond supplied an eleven-page sum-



[illegible] California to the Union of American States; the principal book re[illegible] on a volume just published by William Cullen Bryant; the final three pages presented engravings of feminine fashions in a magazine [illegible] or advertisement. The captions remarked on the preference for "dresses trimmed all over with puffings of net, lace and flowers" [illegible] "the rage this season to depart from simplicity [illegible] the Middle Ages."

The magazine proved itself a success within [illegible] months, attracting 50,000 subscribers (an extraordinarily large number for the period), which confirmed the publishers in their good opinion of [illegible] American public, earnest and self-educating, [illegible] proaching shadow of civil war darkened the lamps [illegible] Territory, stronger rumors of secession at Charleston, John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry, Charles Sumner of Massachusetts nearly [illegible] Harper & Brothers remained faithful to the cause of spiritual and intellectual advancement. Their [illegible] Mason-Dixon Line, a "welcome messenger from [illegible] world" found on Mississippi River steam[illegible] sod houses on the Dakota prairie, on ships working their way around Cape Horn [illegible]

the publishers posted their hope of resolving th[illegible] agree upon points far more numerous than thos[illegible] zine will be to unite rather than to separate th[illegible]

The keeping of the editorial conscience Ray[illegible]mond assigned to George William Curtis, who in[illegible] the magazine's abiding character and premise[illegible] Raymond. Curtis was [illegible] prolific author, and an idealist. As a young man he answered to the nineteenth-century descrip[illegible]tion of a communist, forgoing the chance of a co[illegible]lege education in favor of the Utopian experimen[illegible] conducted in the 1830s by Ralph Waldo Emer[illegible] Emerson had wished to re[illegible] the theory of a society erected on the blueprin[illegible] of his transcendental philosophy, and with tha[illegible] project in view a small community of similarl[illegible] high-minded souls applied themselves to the task[illegible] of reading Plato and cultivating peas on 188 acre[illegible] in West Roxbury, two miles south of Boston. Cur[illegible]tis later observed that the experiment's "eco[illegible]nomic failure was almost a foregone conclusion, [illegible] but during his several semesters in Arcadia h[illegible] taught himself the principal foreign language[illegible] and formed a durable acquaintance not only wit[illegible] Emerson but also with Hawthorne and Thoreau.

An antiestablishment figure, fervent in his ad[illegible]vocacy of women's suffrage and civil-service re[illegible]form and strongly Abolitionist in the years prior[illegible] to the Civil War, Curtis wrote mostly about pol[illegible]itics, remarking on the ways in which politician[illegible] depended upon the nineteenth-century version[illegible] of the sound bite ("whimsical and epigrammati[illegible] extravagance") but noticing also that "the crow[illegible] cheers the saver of the good thing . . . not neces[illegible]sarily all that it may be made to mean."

When Raymond gave up his post as editor t[illegible] [illegible] more closely to the concerns of the *Time*[illegible] (also to the presidential campaign of John Charle[illegible] [illegible] to the writing of the document tha[illegible] formed the Republican Party at Pittsburgh i[illegible] 1856), the publishers made good the loss of hi[illegible] [illegible] judgment as a journalist by establishing, in 1857, a second and more topical journal under the ti[illegible] [illegible] The Weekly directed itself

1870



• Custer's troops fall at Little Bighorn
• Alexander Graham Bell invents telephone



Thomas Edison invents light bulb

1870 1871 1872 1874 1876 1879

insloh Homer, were in the field with the armies Northern Virginia and the Potomac; the *onthly* continued to seek the higher ground oc- pied by writers of fiction and verse. Each month had its editorial by Woodington on the wonders of 52 to dig the dirt for the new dome of the Capitol Hill. This was a job that Mr. Mitch could not delegate, the scaffolding the embodiment of the Union in marble to replace ontment and to build less ornate edifices over e less fortunate nations of the earth:

> With the boast [illegible] of freedom [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

to editorial office. Alden managed to keep pace with the press of events. He was a classical scholar and a poet, educated for the ministry in rural Vermont and descended from an ancestor who arrived in Massachusetts on the *Mayflower*; he wore a full beard in the heavy Victorian manner, and he addressed his authors and staff on matters of style and conduct in terms that invariably remembered as courteous.

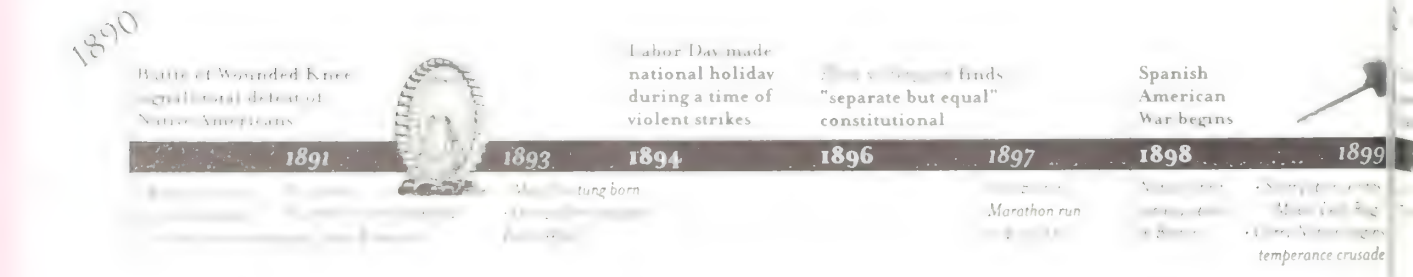
During the early years of Alden's tenure America was still largely pastoral, half the population at work on small farms, the sight lines in the cities still defined by the fingers of the church spires. The "creators of this world—after God" were improving their inventions, figuring out new methods of steel production and a quicker mechanism for the Colt revolver, and Curtis in the "Easy Chair" mocked the corruptions of Manhattan's Tammany Hall gang in league with the bribery of Boss Tweed. Together with the writing of his column for *Harper's New Monthly* he took over the editing of the political pages in *Harper's Weekly*, and encouraged Thomas Nast, who drew the first Republican elephant and Democratic donkey, to become the most feared cartoonist of the age.

The country was coming into its industrial inheritance, and Alden in the 1870s continued Guernsey's practice of sending authors and sketch artists on journeys of discovery—to the Arctic Circle and Ceylon, as well as to the Black Hills of South Dakota, where the gold discovered in 1875 foreclosed the last mortgage that the United States had been willing to grant to the Sioux and the northern Cheyenne. The Indians refused to sell their land at the government price and assembled the following spring near the Little Bighorn River to consider the meagerness of their options. It was this encampment of 15,000 Indians, the largest ever seen in the history of the tribes, that Lt. Col. George A. Custer chose to attack, with a troop of 250 cavalrymen, on the morning of June 25, in the confident belief that he enjoyed the advantages of both superior numbers and surprise.

By 1885 the country was showing the signs of the triumphant prosperity allied with the splendors of the Gilded Age. Men who in 1853 had struck out for the Nevada Territory with a shovel and a mule were returning to New York to show off the proofs of their good fortune in rooms furnished with Italian marble and illuminated by the wonder of electric light. Alden shifted the magazine's emphasis to "visual description and interpretive sensibility," replacing "the literature of information with the literature of power." He assumed an audience of polite and fastidious readers, people of "wealth and importance" intent upon furnishing their minds with ornaments as sumptuous as those that decorated their new houses in Newport or on Fifth Avenue, and by way of appropriate illustration he commissioned the work of Howard Pyle, Frederic Remington and Charles Dana Gibson, inviting them to submit wash drawings in a tragic or sentimental theme rather than unadorned line drawings meant to supplement an expository text. The magazine no longer had space for "the merely topical." What was wanted was personality and the subjective point of view, authors as well as artists with whom a well-bred reader might enjoy a "genteel discourse" or enter into "a conjugation of minds in the world of imagination."

The conjugation was most happily arranged in the realm of fiction, and Alden crowded the magazine with short stories, sometimes as many as eight or ten in a single issue, by authors of the quality of Mark Twain, Willa Cather, Stephen Crane, Edith Wharton, Henry James. Alden thought stories more effective than articles or essays in their portrayal of "the moving drama" of "our modern life and thought," and his belief in the authority of literature (more comprehensive than anything available in the sciences) reversed the magazine's order of editorial priority—British fiction and plain reporting of the American scene replaced by American short stories and fanciful reporting of the European scene. Assuming that his readers took little notice of graft, crime, sports or "the common amusements," Alden was especially admiring of those writers, many of them women, who provided tales of "domestic interest" and brought to their pages "agreeable, well-bred intelligent, racy conversation of the higher kind." Two of his observations stand as a fair imprint of his temperament and prose style:

On the writing of Edward Everett Hale—"His stories always distinguished by some original turn of native wit, peculiar to the New England garden of genius in which they grew, and whose hardy shades then gave forth the same pungent aroma quite distinct from the fragrance of some flower



On the virtue of southern writers who had endured the trials of the Civil War—"The southern people, so completely absorbed in a losing venture, and so nearly losing all material possessions, were gainers in the spiritual sense."

By 1895 Alden's magazine and the publishing house of Harper & Brothers passed as synonyms for the highest grades of American literary ore. The reputation for refinement was grounded on the polite willingness to overlook the uglier and more brutal aspects of late nineteenth-century capitalism. Alden's readers didn't like to be reminded of the poverty and misfortune visited upon the imported proletariat working in the country's sweatshops, factories, and mines; didn't wish to inquire too closely into the slum conditions in Manhattan's Lower East Side (twelve people sleeping in a room ten feet square, paying five cents a night for the privilege of "a pot"), or into the cost of labor at Henry Clay Frick's satanic steel mill in Pittsburgh, where "fingers is going down . . . like bananas at a county fair." The subscribers preferred to follow the fortunes of the opulent plutocrats known to the newspapers as "nature's noblemen," and the magazine's correspondents brought reports of their uncommon amusements—the new craze for bicycle riding, the heroics of the Harvard-Yale game, the comings and goings of Mrs. Astor's carriage or Mr. Carnegie's golf ball.

The fashionable perspective contrived to overlook not only most of the political and financial chicanery of the period but also the garish competition offered by the suddenly numerous publications being set before the public at lower prices and less rarefied elevations of polite taste. *McClure's*, an upstart monthly selling for fifteen cents in 1895, promoted the popular stories of O. Henry and the muckraking journalism of Lincoln Steffens and Ida Tarbell. *Harper's New Monthly* sold for thirty-five cents, and the gradual decline of its circulation in conjunction with a falling off of the company's book sales forced Harper & Brothers into the margins of bankruptcy in the autumn of 1896. Appeal was made to J. P. Morgan, a friend of the proprietors and a patron of the arts known to take an interest in literature as well as painting. Morgan responded with a handsome compliment. "The downfall of the House of Harper would be



ment. What had been a family partnership be-

rection of the magazine remained as it was, and in 1900 Alden persuaded William Dean Howells to

The column had fallen silent on Curtis's death in 1892, and Howells at the turn of the century was the acknowledged dean of American letters; his portrait appeared on cigar-box labels, and in

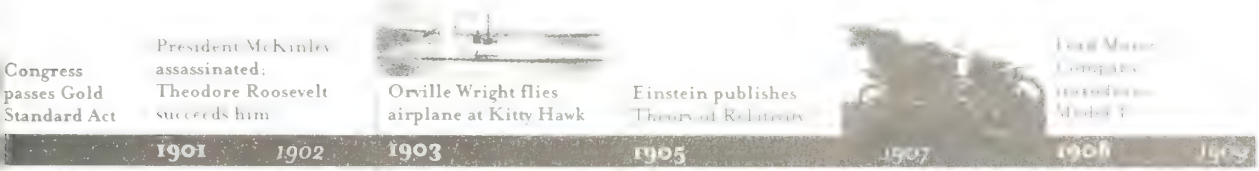
old book was equivalent to the word of God. An avowed socialist and a defender of anarchists, Howells was the son of an Ohio printer who shared with Curtis many of the attributes expected of

of a college education, an autodidact who had taught himself the European languages, an ad-

coln campaign biography. In his youth he wrote occasional newspaper dispatches from Ohio

Raymond at the *Times*, who didn't think he showed much promise as a journalist. During the better part of the decade of the 1870s Howells served

signed his office in 1881 and left Boston for New York to take up his long-deferred vocation





originator, at least in its American form, of the realistic novel. He wrote his two most famous books, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885) and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890), while acting as literary adviser to Harper & Brothers, scouting manuscripts for the publishers and bringing to the magazine the essays of Mark Twain, an old friend with whom he sometimes played billiards. Howells in the "Easy Chair" expressed his disappointment with the coarsened texture of the "immediately modern condition," gazed sadly upon a literary landscape blighted by the lurid bloom of William Randolph Hearst's yellow journalism, worried about "that vast, half-taught, half-bred multitude, which has lately so increased," deplored the vulgarity of a publishing business in which "books are run like lines of dry-goods, and advertised like baking powders and patent medicines."

The magazine meanwhile continued to publish exceptional fiction (Edith Wharton's "The Quicksand," Jack London's "The Sun-dog Trail," Joseph Conrad's "The Informer"), but its reporting of the American scene was out of tune with an America in which Henry James, like Howells, could hear little else except the barbaric "rattle of gold." At Alden's invitation James in the summer of 1904 returned to the United States after an absence of more than twenty years to write an essay for the magazine setting forth his impressions of New York—what had become of the place and how it had impressed itself on him when he knew it as a child. The city's subway system opened in October of that year, and Mayor George B. McClellan invited 15,000 citizens (all of them presumably barbarians but many of them wearing top hats, to ride the first uptown trains from City Hall to West 145th Street. Workmen in the employ of Belmont & Co. completed the railroad tunnel joining the island of Manhattan to Jersey City and the American mainland, and in November Lt. Col. Teddy Roosevelt, lately of the Rough Riders and the victory at San Juan Hill, captured the White House and promptly announced his intention to "bust" the malefactors of great wealth then resident in Wall Street.

James was predictably appalled by "the terrible town." Walking on lower Broadway in the vicinity of Hamilton Grange, he was moved to a feeling of pity for the "caved and dishonored condition" of Trinity Church, mocked by the surrounding roar of commerce, "the new landmarks crushing the old quarters as violent children stamp on snails and caterpillars." He gathered the impression of "dauntless power," of a pitiless energy so vast in scale that it dwarfed the literary imagination, and a "social sameness" that reduced all refinement of feeling or graciousness of manner to loud traffic in cheap publicity.

Alden and Howells approved the sentiment and mourned the loss. They remained in editorial office for another fifteen years (Alden dying in 1919, Howells in 1920), but their magazine was no match for the tide of events floating the brightly colored pavilions of their "genteel discourse" into the open sea of a new and violent century. The First World War began in August 1914; during the next twelve months *Harper's Magazine* refrained from publishing so much as a single paragraph about the unpleasantness on the Western Front.

In the spring of the year that Alden died, Woodrow Wilson was in Paris at the Peace Conference, and the well-to-do women in America were wearing clothes that wouldn't have been out of place in the first-class dining room of the *Titanic*. Their stately figures bound up in heavy silk and shaped by whalebone corsets to match the image of the "Gibson Girl," they had yet to receive the right to vote. Men wore high stiff collars, starched cuffs, top or bowler hats. Telephones were relatively rare, as were automobiles and houses furnished with the luxury of bathrooms. The dance orchestra at Delmonico's played "Dardanella" and "Shine on Harvest Moon," but if a young gentleman offered a young lady a cocktail, he stood instantly revealed as a scoundrel or a fiend.

Two years later Warren Harding was president, and in the new speakeasies on New York's West Fifty-second Street, young girls in short dresses were drinking iced gin under potted palms, smoking Fatima cigarettes, and dancing to the music of Ted Snyder's "Sheik of Araby." Within the little span of what seemed like months, the "Roaring Twenties" came as suddenly to life as a showgirl rising from a cake. The war was over, and why not open the champagne.

Harding recommended a triumphant return to



his word. The pitiless energy that had troubled enry James found expression in record harvests steel and grain, record outputs of tractors and oadway musicals. Henry Ford's assembly lines de- ered a new car every ten seconds, which was mparable to the rate of investment in stock arket schemes guaranteed to put a chicken or a cken in every American pot. Over the course of e decade corporate profits increased by 62 per nt, the country doubled the number of bathtubs, abe Ruth produced a record output of home ns, and on the newly sovereign silver screen udolph Valentino and Clara Bow bewitched a neration eager to give itself up as lost.

The presence of a new audience in what had ecome a new country obliged Thomas Bucklin Vells, the new editor of *Harper's Magazine*, to ake revisions. The periodical was continuing to se subscribers (down from 107,940 in 1915 to ,675 in 1921), *Harper's Weekly* had ceased pub- cation in 1916, and *The Saturday Evening Post*, he first American magazine to recruit a circula- on of more than two million, was selling for ve cents and supplying "visual description and terpretive sensibility" interleaved with adver- sements for Coca-Cola instead of with cherubs lowing bubbles and strewing flowers.

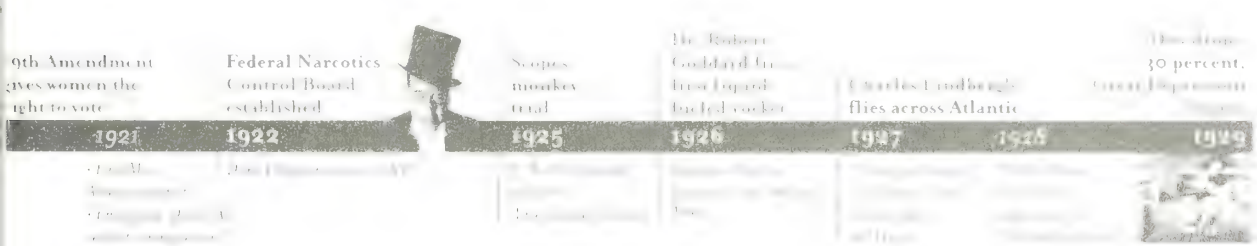
Wells chose to make virtue of necessity. Forty- our years old when he assumed responsibility for he magazine, Wells had been associated with larper & Brothers since 1900 in the capacity of oth editor and publisher. His interests were those f a journalist fluent in arithmetic, and guessing hat it was pointless to chase the kind of polite eader likely to be satisfied with the genteel dis- ourse as seen in *Vanity Fair* or *Vogue* (lavish pub- cations new in the 1920s and shiny with Cecil eaton's photographs of satin evening dresses), he magined a conversation with people distinguished ot only by their urbanity but also by what he efined, in an after-dinner speech, as their "con- ern for the national well-being"—i.e., readers ot to be familiar with the names of both Bertrand ussell and Cole Porter. He redrafted *Harper's Magazine* as a journal "primarily of appraisal and ritical inquiry" that would examine the questions "Where re we, and what does it mean?" over "What is it, nd how does it work?"), and in 1925 he deleted

did his preference for authors as historically minded as H. G. Wells, Walter Lippmann, and Will Durant [illegible] offices from Franklin Square to a new [illegible] Forty-third Street, far enough uptown to allow Wells an easy walk to the Players Club for lunch with Edna and Martin the essays in whatever category he had placed the writing of the "Easy Chair."



A former State Department official and [illegible] Martin had been writing the column since 1920, addressing it to a broad range of public policy issues and presenting himself as "not a literary man." The disclaimer set him apart not only from Howells, his more famous predecessor, but also from the popular intellectual opinion of the day. The romance of a lost generation implicit in the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway had prompted [illegible] in the attitudes of the [illegible] (loud-mouthed, vulgar, badly dressed) offered easy [illegible] Pound. Minor poets drinking absinthe in the bar of the Algonquin Hotel [illegible] sibilities with exquisite witticisms about Amer- [illegible] and George Follansbee Babbitt.

Wells and Martin were more interested in what the idealistic Anne Lynch undoubtedly would [illegible] tion and the fertilizing flood of mass production. They looked upon the [illegible] with the same way they took for granted the cowardice of politicians and the enthusiasm of marathon dancers, but they didn't doubt the energy and inventiveness of the American people. The national [illegible] work in progress, still subject to further amendment and not yet all that one might hope, but in



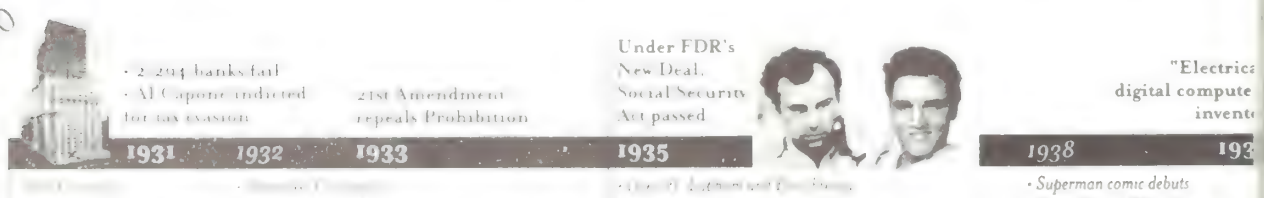
the literature established democracy" that compelled its citizens to think for themselves, to train and educate their collective opinion in such a manner that "out of it shall be found and wise and helpful." Martin objected to Prohibition because he thought it always a mistake to grant clergymen any kind of authority over the "lives and property of their fellow-creatures," and the crime and "calamitous disorder" associated with the traffic in bootleg whiskey he attributed to the folly of attempting "to remake the people to suit the laws." As construed by Martin and revised by Wells, the magazine reacquired the habit of constructive political thought and renewed Henry Raymond's effort to "dissipate the fogs of error" that still tended, even in the prosperous and enlightened 1920s, "to cloud the public mind." The optimistic intention provided the publication with its dominant editorial character during the nearly fifty years between the America that mourned the death of Woodrow Wilson and the America that assassinated Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

The editors who succeeded Wells—Lee Foster Hartman (1931–1941), Frederick Lewis Allen (1941–1953), and John Fischer (1953–1967)—shared his understanding of their common enterprise as a set of improvisations on the theme of informed dissent. Revolutionary in the sense that they knew that all things change much more quickly than people like to suppose, they carried forward the American quarrel with Providence by questioning whatever temporary wisdom chanced to have been elected to political or literary office.

During the years in which the country was engaged with the sorrows of the Great Depression, the consequences of Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal," and the conduct of the Second World War, the magazine found the clearest expression of its purpose in the voice of Bernard DeVoto, the essayist and historian who succeeded Martin in the "Easy Chair" in 1935. The author of fifteen books, among them *Mark Twain's America*, *Across the Wide Missouri*, and a five-volume history of the American West, for which he received both the Bancroft and the Pulitzer prizes, DeVoto wore his convictions on his sleeve. Not a man to mince words, he refused to cooperate with the investigations loosed upon the citizenry by the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1949 c the ground that "I like a country where it's n body's damned business what magazine anybo reads, what he thinks, whom he has cocktai with. I like a country where we do not have stuff the chimney against listening ears.... We h that kind of country only a little while ago a I'm for getting it back. It was a lot less scar than the one we've got now."

Born in 1897 in Ogden, Utah, under the we ern slope of the Wasatch Mountains, the son a Mormon father and a Catholic mother (bo apostate), DeVoto attended public high scho and Harvard University before settling, in 192 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Like Raymond a Curtis, he took an active part in political affai Often in Washington to lobby Congress on b half of the national forests and public lands, h wrote testimony for the Department of the Int rior and policy papers for Adlai Stevenson's 19 presidential campaign. His presence in the E strengthened his fierce affection for the We and his writing is everywhere marked by poigna remembrance of western landscapes, weste grasses, western animals and birds.

The composition of the "Easy Chair" DeVo looked upon as the first of what he called his "p vate assignments." The column was remarkal not only for the broad range of its topics (the i proper manufacture of kitchen knives and t proper blending of a martini, dust storms in Kans and the fascist blueprint of Adolf Hitler's tho sand-year Reich, the Mexican War, Huey Lor sagebrush, and the Normandy invasion) but al for the varied inflections of phrase (poetic, moc ing, philosophical) with which DeVoto empti the slops of ridicule on the heads of imbecile jo nalists and nervous politicians. He detested fla waving patriots, thought Harry Truman too co servative in his politics and Thomas Wolfe t liberal with his adjectives, regarded Gertru Stein's bleak and ornamental prose as "an a which floated freely in a medium of pure capri sustained by nothing except its awareness of own inner wondrousness." Usually at odds with peers in the intellectual professions, especia those among them who complained about t crass materialism of American society, he on said, "There is something intrinsically absurd the image of a literary man informing 120 milli people that their ideals are base, their beliefs u



orthy, their ideas vulgar, their institutions corrupt, and, in sum, their civilization too trivial to engage that literature's respect."

Much of the same spirit that informed DeVoto's attitudes toward literature and politics showed up in the character of the magazine edited by Frederick Lewis Allen, who was also an historian, and whose chronicle of the 1920s, *Only Yesterday*, proved so successful that it set what has since become the standard style and form for the writing of popular history. A good many of Allen's contemporaries in the late 1930s translated the miseries of the Depression into an apology for Marxism, but he thought their arguments unfounded "not by dogma, but by the logic of advanced capitalism itself; or, to put it another way, by capitalism turned to democratic ends." Impressed by the scale of the American achievement and mind of measuring the improved standards of living brought about by "a genius that was not static but venturesome," Allen thought the leftist side of the argument occupied by people "reacting anarily" to the news in the morning papers of 1901. As an editor he often rewrote manuscripts that he deemed insufficient to their purpose, and he tended to favor authors (among them John Kenneth Galbraith, Dorothy Thompson, James Thurber, and E. B. White) suspicious of ideological doctrine and revealed truth. *Harper's Magazine* in the late 1940s was selling for fifty cents a copy at a circulation of 145,000, and once when Allen was asked to speak to its bias, he said that it had little use for the public-relations counselor and the official announcement, choosing to reserve its trust for the individual observer "who sits all by himself, unorganized, unrecognized, unorthodox and unterrified."

Allen died in 1954, DeVoto in 1955, and both the editorship of the magazine and the occupancy of the "Easy Chair" passed to John Fischer, who had been in charge of trade-book publishing at Harper & Brothers. His long-standing friendship with his two predecessors was founded on



barbed wire, grease windmills, build barns; in the 1930s he had worked for Henry Wallace in the Department of Agriculture, during the Second World War for the American intelligence services in India and Washington. Admiring the same kind of enterprise in other people, Fischer crowded the magazine with what he regarded as useful suggestions from writers as different as Arnold Toynbee, Barbara Tuchman, and James Baldwin. Like Allen, he was a tinkerer with manuscripts and the models of human possibility, preferring the man who could [illegible] of different tasks with a high degree of competence to the virtuoso who could perform only one trick with exceptional brilliance. On the frontier, virtuosos tended to be something of a [illegible]. They seldom could shoe horses, and they weren't much good with common nouns.

Fischer knew enough about the workings of democracy to know that quite ordinary people had the tools in hand to better their lot if only they



Japan bombs Pearl Harbor; U.S. enters World War II



U.S. drops atomic bombs on Japan, ending World War II

Truman orders army desegregated as federal workforce is screened for "subversives"

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First U.S. television broadcast

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Most of the magazine's long-term subscribers as-
med (as did Fischer, DeVoto, and Raymond)
at intellectuals were indebted to society and
ere, accordingly, to apply their knowledge to its
rvice. Why else but that they be sent to mar-
ries, and how else but there to pay for steady
e for books? Morris enlisted a company of writ-
s who regarded the society's principal institu-
ons (schools as well as governments) as their
atural enemies, which was a brave and noble
ose and maybe even true, but not one that sold
ot of copies in Detroit. The accounting at the
d of 1972 showed an annual loss of what was
en the impressive sum of $2,000,000, the circu-
ılation well below 300,000, and the magazine re-
nstituted, for tax purposes, as a division of the
inneapolis Star and Tribune. Blaming Cowles
r the unwelcome news, Morris abruptly resigned
March 1971, and for the next thirteen years the
agazine drifted through a period of financial
nd editorial instability. Cowles retained own-
ship until 1980, but by then the losses were
pproaching two million dollars a year, and the
anagers of his newspaper no longer were
ay the bills. They declared the magazine ex-
nct in early June, but the MacArthur foundation
Chicago—at the urging of John D. MacArthur,
ne founder's grandson and the present publish-
—revived it in time to make the next monthly
eadlines. Two years later the publication was
gain reconstituted as the small and entirely in-
ependent entity, the nonprofit Harper's Maga-
ne Foundation, now sustained by its own ad-
ertising and subscription revenues.

The several changes of management blunted the magazine's editorial intent and scattered the stores of memory accumulated by successive editorial staffs. Of the eight editors who left their marks on the magazine between 1967 and 1983 the magazine employed four editors of very different character—Morris, [illegible] premises long enough to form a clear understanding of what it was they were expected to [illegible] ence between good writing and bad. The magazine during their collected tenure published the essays of Annie Dillard and Murray Kempton [illegible] Walker, Gabriel García Marquez, George Plimpton, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., and Philip Roth), but it lacked a distinctive editorial character. To whom was the magazine addressed, and what could be found in its pages that couldn't be found on other racks in the same airport newsstand?

[illegible] azine's financial trouble, but much of it was associated with the rapid series of changes that had begun to reshape the country's systems of communication during the decade of the 1960s. [illegible] it was still possible to make distinctions between [illegible] the lively arts. Their various audiences recognized the difference between journalism, opera, politics, and the movies, and a presidential candidate [illegible] the distance [illegible] grammar of print didn't bear literal translation into the electronic languages of television and [illegible] tures of feeling and thought. As the lines between fact and fiction became as irrelevant as they were [illegible] executive privileges of novelists *manqué*. The presumption allowed them to arrange the materials [illegible] fragments of conversation, impressions of char- [illegible] most applause and the highest fees. Substituting the veneer of style for the weight of evidence, and making few transitions between subject and object (the interviewer being as important as, often [illegible] presence [illegible]



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President John F. Kenned

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1972 1973 1974 1975 1977 1979

• Three Mile Island
• Skylab falls to earth

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dialects spoken by the sets and subsets of the
oree lawyer.

By the late summer of 1983, the year that I was
ne, the marvels of postmodern communication
ere dividing the whole spectrum of the country's
ito remote images receding from one another lit-
rst editors had seen as the "multiplied and
phemeral pages" of a periodical press "inter-
ansient interest," the newer forms of media had
lded not only cable channels, CD-ROM, and
oms of virtual reality posted on blimps and ot-
ce buildings. How then to address what the
ealth of shared meaning," and if the curtain
as again going up on a brave new world, where
d one look first, and what was the perspective

During my first term as editor I often had asked
e questions of Jack Fischer, and he had en-
ine, to become acquainted not only with the
s, and Raymond. Their writings reflected a re-
arkably similar temperament, and in each of

the discovery of individual observers, "un-
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HARPERS

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The more efficient and expensive



1981 1982 1986 1987 1988 1989

the same words, the same official
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ns of Pat Robertson. The automatous media say everything and hear nothing, and behind
profound silence. The machines make a wonderful noise, but to whom do they speak, and in
omnipresent media come to imagine that
their prerecorded programs of the world. *Harper's*
the proposition that it knows not nearly enough
what its first editors described as "the varied intellectual movements of this most stirring and productive age." In line with the magazine's
standing assumption that a working democ-
I to the wisdoms in office, the authors appearing in its pages over the last sixteen years,
nd Tom Wolfe, proceed on the premise
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in effect, look at this, see how much more beautiful and strange and full of possibility is the

A
n periodicals (three of them

economic, environmental, or weapons systems)
two books as yet unpublished (one of them abou
cyberspace, the other about feminism or Japan)
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three reports from charitable foundations—al
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uscripts, solicited and unsolicited, whose author
have discovered, among other items of interest

Although I count myself a reasonably well
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Several years ago on the editorial page of th
nouncement that "great publications magnif
The sentence employed the wrong verb. Th
instruments of the media multiply or amplify
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ously attempts it—and the emotions called fort
Harper long ago intended, the common stores
energy and hope.



IN THE LAND OF THE ROCOCO MARXISTS

Why no one is celebrating the Second American Century

BY TOM WOLFE

Where was *I*? On the wrong page? The wrong channel? Outside the bandwidth? As building managers here in New York shut down the elevators at 11:30 P.M. on December 31, 1999, so that citizens would not be trapped between floors by Y2K microchip failures—and licensed pyrotechnicians launched F.A.A.-sanctioned fireworks from cordoned-off Central Park "venues" at precisely 12:00:01 A.M., January 1, 2000, to mark the arrival of the twenty-first century and the third millennium—did a single solitary savant note that the First American Century had just come to an end and the Second American Century had begun? —and that there might well be five, six, eight more to come?—resulting in a Pax Americana lasting a thousand years? Or did I miss something?

Did a single historian mention that America now dominates the world to an extent that would have made Alexander the Great, who thought there were no more worlds to conquer, get down on all fours and beat his fists on the ground in despair because he was merely a warrior and had never heard of international mergers and acquisitions, rock and rap, fireball movies, TV, the NBA, the World Wide Web, and the "globalization" game?

Was a single bard bestirred to write a mighty anthem—along the lines of James Thomson's "Rule, Britannia! Britannia rule the waves! Britons never shall be slaves!"—for America, the nation that in the century just concluded had vanquished two barbaric nationalistic brotherhoods, the German Nazis and the Russian Communists, two hordes of methodical slave-hunting predators who made the Huns and Magyars look whimsical

Tom Wolfe [illegible] A Man in Full, [illegible] for Harper's Magazine, *"Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast," appeared in the November 1989 issue.*

My impression was that one American Century rolled into another with all the pomp and circumstance of a mouse click.

Did anybody high or low look for a Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi to create a monument to the ideal of the Statue of Liberty for the nation that, in the twentieth century, even more so than in the nineteenth, opened her arms to people from all over the globe—to Armenians, Hmong, Cambodians, Laotians, Hmong, Ethiopians, Albanians, Senegalese, Guyanese, Eritreans, Cubans, as well as everybody else—and made sure they enjoyed full civil rights, including the means to take political power in a city the size of Miami if they could muster the votes? Did anybody even wistfully envision such a monument to America the International Haven of Democracy? Or had the *Irish Art* subscription run out?

Did any of the America-at-century's-end network TV specials strike the exuberant note that Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee struck in 1897? All I remember are voice-overs saying that for better or worse . . . hmm, hmm . . . McCarthyism, racism, Vietnam, right-wing militias, Oklahoma City, Heaven's Gate, Doctor Death . . . on balance, hmm, we're not entirely sure . . . for better or worse, America had won the Cold War . . . hmm, hmm, hmm . . .

My impression was that one American Century rolled into another with all the pomp and circumstance of a mouse pad. America's great triumph inspired all the patriotism and pride (or, if you'd rather, chauvinism), all of the yearning for glory and empire (or, if you'd rather, the spirit of Manifest Destiny), all of the martial jubilee music of a mouse click.

Such was my impression; but it was only that, my impression. So I drew upon the University of Michigan Communications Department's fabled public-opinion survey resources. They sent me the results of four studies, each approaching the matter from a different angle. Chauvinism? The spirit of Manifest Destiny? According to one survey, 73 percent of Americans don't want the United States to intervene abroad unless in cooperation with other nations, presumably so that we won't get all the blame. Excitement? Americans have no strong feelings about their country's supremacy one way or the other. They are lacking in affect, as the clinical psychologists say.

There were seers who saw this coming even at the unabashedly pompous peak (June 22) of England's 1897 Jubilee. One of them was Rudyard Kipling, the empire's de facto poet laureate, who wrote a poem for the Jubilee, "Recessional," warning: "Lo, all our pomp of yesterday/Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!" He and many others had the uneasy feeling that the foundations of European civilization were already shifting beneath their feet, a feeling indicated by the much used adjectival compound *fin-de-siècle*. Literally, of course, it meant nothing more than "end of the century." But it connoted something modern, baffling, and trou[illegible] in Europe. Both Nietzsche and Marx did their greatest work seeking to explain the mystery. The term both used was "decadence."

But if there was decadence, what was decaying? Religious faith and moral [illegible] that had become implausible, said Nietzsche, who in 1882 made the most famous statement in modern philosophy—"God is dead"—and [illegible] truthfully accurate predictions for the twentieth century. He even estimated when they would begin to come true: about 1915. (1) The faith [illegible] would invest in barbaric "brother [illegible] the robbery and exploitation of the non-brothers." Their names turned out, in due course, to be the German Nazis and the Russian Communists. (2) There would be "wars such as have never been waged on earth." Their names turned out to be World War I and World War II. (3) There no [illegible] truth but only "truth" in quotation marks, depending upon [illegible] to control the masses. The modern barbarian found most useful at any given moment. The result would be universal skepticism, cynicism, [illegible] and contempt. The First World War began in 1914 and ended in 1918. On cue, as if Nietzsche were still alive to direct the drama, an entire [illegible] with a completely new management in Europe that embodiment of skepticism, cynicism, irony, and contempt, the Intellectual.

The word "intellectual," used as a noun referring to the "intellectual laborer" who assumes a political stance, did not exist until Georges Clemenceau used it in 1898 during the Dreyfus case, congratulating those "intellectuals" such as Marcel Proust and Anatole France, who had joined Dreyfus's great champion, Emile Zola. Zola was an entirely new form of political eminence, a popular novelist. His famous *J'accuse* was published on the front page of a daily newspaper, *L'Aurore* ("The Dawn"), which printed 300,000 copies and hired hundreds of extra newsboys, who sold virtually every last one by midafternoon.

FROM THE OUTSET THE EMINENCE OF THIS NEW CREATURE, THE INTELLECTUAL, WAS INSEPARABLE FROM HIS NECESSARY INDIGNATION

Zola and Clemenceau provided a wholly unexpected leg up in life for the ordinary worker ants of "pure intellectual labor" (Clemenceau's term): your fiction writers, playwrights, poets, history and lit profs, that whole cottage industry of poor souls who scribble, scribble, scribble. Zola was an extraordinary reporter (or "documenter," as he called himself) who had devoured the details of the Dreyfus case to the point where he knew as much about it as any judge, prosecutor, or law clerk. But that inconvenient detail of Zola's biography was soon forgotten. The new hero, the intellectual, didn't need to burden himself with the irksome toil of reporting or research. For that matter, he needed no particular education, no scholarly training, no philosophical grounding, no conceptual frameworks, no knowledge of academic or scientific developments other than the sort of stuff you might pick up in Section 9 of the Sunday newspaper. Indignation about the powers that be and the bourgeois fools who did their bidding — that was all you needed. Bango! You were an intellectual.



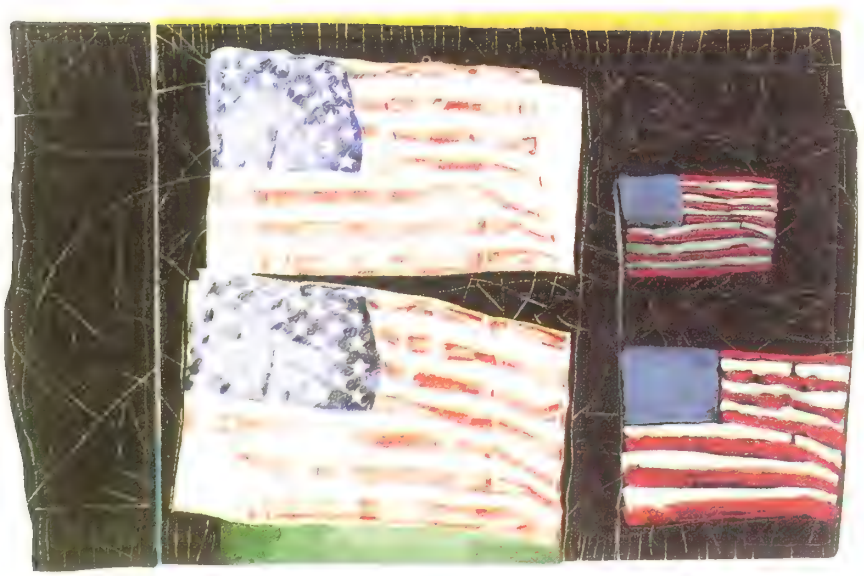
From the very outset the eminence of this new creature, the intellectual, who was to play such a tremendous role in the history of the twentieth century, was inseparable from his *necessary* indignation. It was his indignation that elevated him to a plateau of moral superiority. Once up there, he was in a position to look down at the rest of humanity. And it hadn't cost him any effort, intellectual or otherwise. As Marshall McLuhan would put it years later: "Moral indignation is a technique used to endow the idiot with dignity." Precisely which intellectuals of the twentieth century were or were not idiots is a debatable point, but it is hard to argue with the definition I once heard a French diplomat offer at a dinner party: "An intellectual is a person knowledgable in one field who speaks out only in others."

After the First World War, American writers and scholars had the chance to go to Europe in large numbers for the first time. They got an eyeful of the Intellectual up close. That sneer, that high-minded aloofness from the mob, those long immaculate alabaster forefingers with which they pointed down at the rubble of a botched civilization—it was irresistible. The only problem was that when our neophyte intellectuals came back to the United States to strike the pose, there was no rubble to point at. Far from being a civilization in ruins, the United States had emerged from the war as the new star occupying the center of the world stage. Far from reeking of decadence, the United States had the glow of a young giant: brave, robust, innocent and unsophisticated.

But young scribblers roaring drunk (as Nietzsche had predicted) on skep-

> IN THE WORLD WE'LL SOON BE LIVING IN, THESE YEARS OF INDIGNATION WILL LOOK LIKE PEOPLE ANOMALY. WE BECAME THE MOST POWERFUL POWER IN THE HISTORY OF THE PLANET

[illegible] and confident people in the mood to let such circumstances . . . stand in the way. From the very outset the attempts of this country cousin, the American intellectual, to catch up with his urbane European model was touching, as only the strivings of a colonial subject can be. Throughout the twentieth century, the picture would never change (and today, a hundred years later, the sweaty little colonial still trots along at the heels of . . . sahib). In the 1920s the first job was to catch up with the European intellectuals' mockery of the "bourgeoisie," which had begun a full forty years earlier. H. L. Mencken, probably the most brilliant American essayist of the twentieth century, led the way by pie-ing the American version of same with his term: "the booboisie." In fiction the solution was to pull back the covers from this apple-cheeked, mom's-cooking country of ours and say, "There! Take a good look at what's underneath! Get a whiff of the rot just below the surface!" — the way Sinclair Lewis did it in *Main Street* and *Babbitt*, for which he became the first American to win the Nobel Prize in literature, and Sherwood Anderson did it in *Winesburg, Ohio*. Anderson's specialty was exposing the Middle American hypocrite, such as the rigidly proper, sexually twisted Peeping Tom midwestern preacher. He created a stock character and a stock plot that others have been laboriously cranking out ever since in books, TV, and movies, from *Peyton Place* to *American Beauty*.



The Great Depression of the 1930s gave our version of this new breed, the intellectual, plenty of material to get wholesomely indignant about. For a change, America did look dreadful. But even then things weren't as blissfully vile as they were in Europe, the birthplace of the intellectual. Europe, after all, now had the Depression plus fascism. The solution was what became the specialty of our colonial intellectuals: the adjectival catch-up. Europe had real fascism? Well, we had "social fascism." And what was that? That was the name Left intellectuals gave to Roosevelt's New Deal. Roosevelt's "reforms" merely masked the fascism whose dark night would soon descend upon America.

"Fascism" was, in fact, a Marxist coinage. Marxists borrowed the name of Mussolini's Italian party, the Fascisti, and applied it to Hitler's Nazis, adroitly papering over the fact that the Nazis, like Marxism's standard-bearers, the Soviet Communists, were revolutionary socialists. In fact, "Nazi" was (most annoyingly) shorthand for the National Socialist German Workers' Party. European Marxists successfully put over the idea that Nazism was the brutal, decadent last gasp of "capitalism." Few of their colonial cousins in America became doctrinaire, catechism-drilled Marxists, but most were soon enveloped in a heavy Marxist mist. The Marxist fable of the "capitalists" and the "bourgeoisie" oppressing "the masses"—"the proletariat"—took hold even among intellectuals who were anti-Marxist. Prior to the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939, the American Communist Party had great success mobilizing the colonials on behalf of "anti-fascist" causes such as the Loyalists' battle against the "fascist" Franco in the Spanish Civil War. "Anti-fascism" became a universal ray gun, good for zapping anybody, anywhere, from up here . . . on the intellectuals' Everest of Indignation.

After the Second World War, this mental atmosphere led to a curious anomaly. By objective standards, the United States quickly became the most powerful, prosperous, and popular nation of all time. Militarily we developed the power to blow the entire planet to smithereens by turning a cou-

ole of keys in a missile silo, but we also accomplished history's most amaz-
ng engineering feat, breaking the bonds of Earth's gravity and flying to the
noon. And there was something still more amazing. The country turned in-
o what the Utopian socialists of the nineteenth century, the Saint-Simons
nd Fouriers, had dreamed about: an El Dorado where the average working
nan would have the political freedom, the personal freedom, the money, and
he free time to fulfill his potential in any way he saw fit. It got to the point
where if you couldn't reach your electrician or your air conditioning mechanic,
t was because he was off on a Royal Caribbean cruise with his third wife. And
s soon as American immigration restrictions were relaxed in the 1960s, people
of every land, every color, every religion, people from Africa, Asia, South
America, and the Caribbean, began pouring into the United States.

But our intellectuals dug in like terriers. Just as they had after the First World War, they refused to buckle under to [illegible] circumstances. They saw *through* El Dorado and produced the most inspired adjectival catch-ups of the twentieth century. Real fascism and genocide were finished after the Second World War, but the intellectuals used the Rosenberg case, the Hiss case, McCarthyism—the whole Communist Witch Hunt—and, above all, the war in Vietnam to come up with . . . "incipient fascism" (Herbert Marcuse, much prized as a bona-fide European "Frankfurt School" Marxist who had moved to our shores), "preventive fascism" (Marcuse again), "local fascism" (Walter Lippmann), "brink of" fascism (Charles Reich), "informal Fascism" (Philip Green), latent fascism (Dotson Rader), not to mention the most inspired catch-up of all: "cultural genocide." Cultural genocide referred to the refusal of American universities to have open admissions policies, so that any minority applicant could enroll without regard to GPAs and SATs and other instruments of latent-incipient-brink-of-fascist repression.

"Cultural genocide" was inspired, but in this entire opéra bouffe of fascism, racism, and fascist-racist genocide, the truly high note was hit by one Susan Sontag. In a 1967 article for *Partisan Review* entitled "What's Happening to America," she wrote: "The white race *is* the cancer of human history, it is the white race and it alone—its ideologies and inventions—which eradicates autonomous populations wherever it spreads, which has upset the ecological balance of the planet, which now threatens the very existence of life itself."

The white race *is* the cancer of human history? Who was this woman? Who and what? An anthropological epidemiologist? A renowned authority on the history of cultures throughout the world, a synthesizer of the magnitude of a Max Weber, a Joachim Wach, a Sir James Frazer, an Arnold Toynbee? Actually, she was just another scribbler who spent her life signing up for protest meetings and lumbering to the podium, encumbered by her prose style, which had a handicapped parking sticker valid at *Partisan Review*. Perhaps she was exceptionally hell-bent on illustrating McLuhan's line about indignation endowing the idiot with dignity, but otherwise she was just a typical American intellectual of the post–World War II period.

After all, having the faintest notion of what you were talking about was irrelevant. Any scholar or scientist who merely possessed profound knowledge in his or her own field did not qualify as an intellectual. The prime example was Noam Chomsky, a brilliant linguist who on his own figured out that language is a structure built into the very central nervous system of *Homo sapiens*, a theory that neuroscientists, lacking the instruments to do so heretofore, have only recently begun to verify. But Chomsky was not known as an intellectual until he denounced the war in Vietnam, something he knew next to nothing about—thereby qualifying for his new eminence.

American intellectuals of the Adjectival Fascism phase had a terrible year in 1989. In June, Chinese students in Beijing rebelled against the *ancien* Maoist *régime*, defied the tanks, and brought out into Tiananmen Square a plaster statue, the *Goddess of Democracy*, who, with her arm lifted to the heavens, looked suspiciously like the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor. Who among the

REAL FASCISM [illegible]
AFTER THE SECOND [illegible]
BUT WE HAD INCIPIENT
FASCISM, LOCAL FASCISM
AND [illegible] FASCISM

> ON NOVEMBER 9 THE BERLIN WALL CAME DOWN. IT WAS A MASSIVE BLOW TO THE MARXIST LEFT. IT MADE IT DAMNED HARD TO EXPRESS YOUR SKEPTICISM, YOUR CYNICISM, YOUR CONTEMPT

made headlines or would have suspected that Chinese dissidents had been looking to America as their model of freedom all along? Then on November 9 the Berlin Wall came down, and in no time the Soviet Union collapsed and its Eastern European empire disintegrated.

It was a mess, all right—no two ways about that. It made it damned hard to express your skepticism, your cynicism, your contempt, in Marxist terms. "Capitalism," "proletariat," "the masses," "the means of production," "infantile leftism," "the dark night of fascism," or even "anti-fascism"—all these things suddenly sounded, well, not so much *wrong* . . . as *old* . . . "Vulgar Marxism" it came to be called, vulgar in the sense of . . . unsophisticated.

The important thing was not to admit you were wrong in any fundamental way. You couldn't let anybody get away with the notion that just because the United States had triumphed, and just because some unfortunate things had come out after the Soviet archives were opened up—I mean, damn!—it looks like Hiss and the Rosenbergs actually *were* Soviet agents—and even the Witch Hunt, which was one of the bedrocks of our beliefs—damn again!—these books by Klehr and Haynes, in the Yale series on American Communism, and Radosh and Weinstein make it pretty clear that while Joe McCarthy was the despicable liar we always knew he was, Soviet agents really did penetrate the U.S. government. Yale!—so respectable, too!—how could they give their imprimatur to these renegade right-wing scholars who do this kind of stuff? Not to mention the Spanish Civil War—*archives*! Turns out the Loyalists secretly called in the Soviets at the very outset of hostilities—and if they'd won, Spain would have been the first Soviet puppet state!

And now Vietnam, our other bedrock, the holiest of all our causes—those damnable archives again! How could anybody be so perfidious as to open up secret records? They make it look like the Soviets and the Chinese, in concert with the North Vietnamese Communists, were manipulating the Vietcong all along! They make it look like America's intervention in Vietnam was some kind of idealistic crusade, fought solely to stop the onslaught of Communism's Magyar hordes in Southeast Asia!

The main thing is to make sure we don't let them use this stuff to invalidate the way we ascended the Olympian peaks of aloofness for seven decades, from November 11, 1918, the end of World War I, to November 9, 1989, the day the Wall fell. The fact that America won the Cold War does not wash away the stains America left during the Cold War, does it? We've still got the devil himself, the brute, Joe McCarthy, and Richard Nixon and the House Committee on Un-American Activities and all that crowd, who cost a lot of people in Hollywood and academia their jobs, don't we? And racism? The mere fact that the powers that be gave everybody all these so-called civil rights and voting rights doesn't mean that virulent and peculiarly American disease has been eliminated, does it? Not by any means!

The urge to expose the fallacy of "American triumphalism" has led to a poignant moment here in the year 2000. For eleven years now, ever since Tiananmen Square and the fall of the Wall, people in the former empire of the Soviet Union have been looking to the United States for the very principles of living in a condition of freedom. East European college students will startle you with their knowledge of America's own struggle for freedom two and a quarter centuries ago. In 1993, in New York, I happened to meet a Hungarian student who knew speeches by the great orator of the American Revolution, Patrick Henry, by heart, and not just his famous "Give me liberty or give me death" speech of 1775, either, but also his 1765 Stamp Act speech, the one before the colonial House of Burgesses in Williamsburg. He could recite it almost verbatim:

"'Caesar had his Brutus; Charles the First, his Cromwell; and George the Third—

"'Treason!' cried the Speaker of the House. 'Treason!'

"'—may profit by their example,' said Patrick Henry. 'If this be treason, make the most of it!'"

Young people like him in Eastern Europe, where writers such as Solzhenitsyn and Václav Havel were the very keepers of the flame of freedom, have naturally sought out American literary figures to learn of the great democratic principles of the freest nation on earth. But almost without exception, American writers are not intellectuals. If our young Hungarian were to walk up to an American intellectual and recite Patrick Henry's Stamp Act speech, he would receive in response only (in Thomas Mann's phrase) a hollow silence.

Where else can the millions recently freed from the late Soviet tyranny turn? To America's clergy? Alas, except for the rare brave Roman Catholic padre, America's clergy have become irrelevant to public opinion, unless they yield to the temptation—and many have—to become intellectuals themselves.

That leaves our academic philosophers, our year 2000 versions of Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, and David Hume. Here we come upon one of the choicest chapters in the human comedy. Today, at any leading American university, a Kant, with all his dithering about God, freedom, and immortality, or even a Hume, wouldn't survive a year in graduate school, much less get hired as an instructor. The philosophy departments, history departments, English and comparative literature departments, and, at many universities, anthropology, sociology, and even psychology departments are now divided, in John L'Heureux's delicious terminology (*The Handmaid of Desire*), into the Young Turks and the Fools. Most Fools are old, mid-fifties, early sixties, but a Fool can be any age, twenty-eight as easily as fifty-eight, if he is one of that minority on the faculty who still believe in the old nineteenth-century Germanic modes of so-called objective scholarship. Today the humanities faculties are hives of abstruse doctrines such as structuralism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, deconstruction, reader-response theory, commodification theory . . . The names vary, but the subtext is always the same: Marxism may be dead, and the proletariat has proved to be hopeless. They're all at sea with their third wives. But we can find new proletariats whose ideological benefactors we can be—women, non-whites, put-upon white ethnics, homosexuals, transsexuals, the polymorphously perverse, pornographers, prostitutes (sex workers), hardwood trees—which we can use to express our indignation toward the powers that be and our aloofness to their bourgeois stooges, to keep the flame of skepticism, cynicism, irony, and contempt burning. This will not be Vulgar Marxism; it will be Rococo Marxism, elegant as a Fragonard, sly as a Watteau. We won't get too hung up on political issues, which never seem to work out right anyway. Instead, we will expose the stooges' so-called truths, which the Fools ignorantly cultivate, and deconstruct their self-deluding concoctions of eternal verities. We will show how the powers that be manipulate, with poisonous efficiency, the very language we speak in order to imprison us in an invisible panopticon, to use the late French "poststructuralist" Michel Foucault's term.

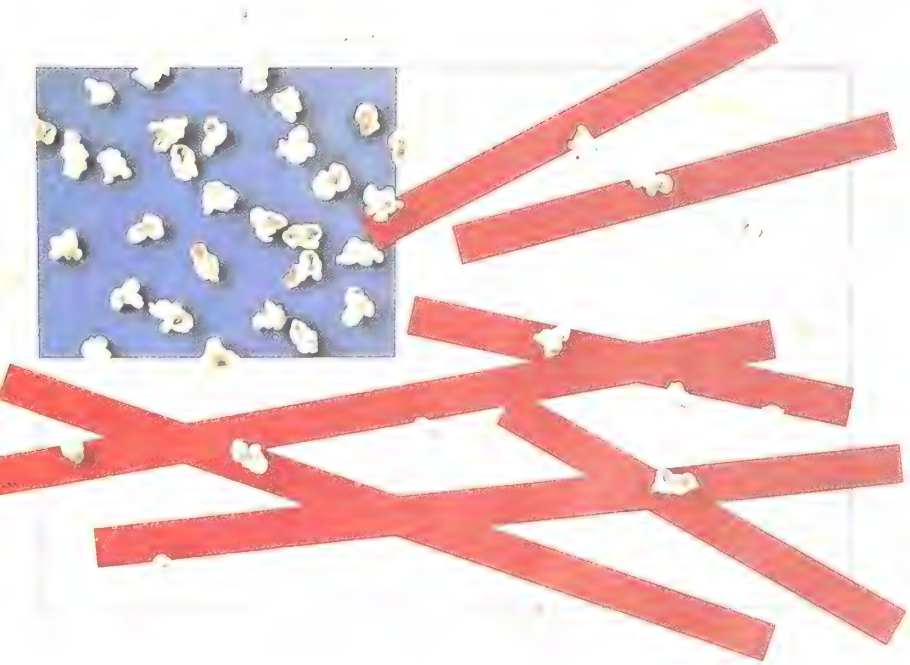
MARXISM MAY BE DEAD, AND WE GOT [illegible] ELEGANT AS A FRAGONARD, SLY AS A WATTEAU. POLITICAL ISSUES NEVER WORKED OUT ANYWAY



Foucault and another Frenchman, Jacques Derrida, are the great idols of Rococo Marxism in America. Could it be otherwise? Today, as throughout the twentieth century, our intellectuals remain sweaty little colonials, desperately trotting along, trying to catch up, catch up; catch up with the way the idols do it in France, which is through Theory, Theory, Theory. In this pursuit, some colonials inevitably run faster than others, and leading the pack currently are two academicians, Stanley Fish and Judith Butler. Before

TODAY'S INTELLECTUALS ARE WITH COLONIZING, EROTIC, ALONG, LIFTING TO CAPITAL WITH THE IDOLS IN FRANCE AND THEIR THEORY, THEORY, THEORY.

the Wall came down, the archetypal American intellectual was a mere scribbler who joyfully hoisted himself up to the status of intellectual. Since the Wall came down, the archetypal American intellectual is the scholar who has joyfully lowered himself to the status of mere intellectual. If Nietzsche's already fabulous powers of prophecy had been specific enough to dream up a couple of characters to dramatize the deconstruction of Truth with a capital T that he foresaw, he would have dreamed up Fish and Butler and thrust them into *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Fish is a sixty-one-year-old Milton scholar with a Ph.D. from Yale. Or a lapsed Milton scholar; he achieved stardom as the Rococo head of the English Department at Duke and now has been commissioned by the University of Illinois at Chicago, for $230,000 a year plus perks (big-time stuff in academia), to assemble a stable of Rococo stars in paraproletariat studies, not excluding, he says, study of "body parts, excretory functions, the sex trade, dildos, bisexuality, transvestism, and lesbian pornography." Fish says such things with a true Swinburn gusto, relishing the inevitable alarm that ensues. As colonial rococovists go, he cuts a uniquely dashing figure, driving a green Jaguar, a long scarf furled about his neck, à la Theophile Gautier. In his rakishness and mischievous gleam, he differs markedly from the cranky deconstruction crews who follow him. He does wear sweaters with no shirt visible underneath, however, just as nearly all Young Turks, male or female, affect some sort of Generation X garb—sweatshirts, T-shirts, jeans, sneakers, all-black Young Artists outfits—in order to out-casual and out-Young the Fools, who are still stuck back in the Tweedy Prof mode.



On the conceptual level, Fish is best known for his "reader-response theory," which holds that literary texts mean nothing in themselves, that meaning is only a mental construct concocted by the reader. It is a short step from this premise to the argument that the powers that be have had a picnic loading the language with terminology calculated to make you concoct the mental constructs they want you to concoct in order to manipulate your mind.

May I offer an arch and perhaps familiar but clear example? Recently I came across a woman at one of our top universities who taught a course in Feminist Theory and gave her students F's if they spelled the plural of the female of the species "women" on a test or in a paper. She insisted on "womyn," since the powers that be, at some point far back in the mists of history, had built male primacy in to the very language itself by making "women" 60 percent "men." How did the students react? They shrugged. They have long since learned the futility of objecting to Rococo Marxism. They just write "womyn" and go about the business of grinding out a credit in the course.

One student told me the only problem was that when she wrote her papers on her word processor and used spell check, all hell broke loose. "You get these little wavy red lines all over the screen, under 'womyn.' Spell check doesn't have 'womyn.'" Then she shrugged. "Or at least mine doesn't."

The undisputed queen of feminist theory is Judith Butler, a forty-four-year-old Hegel scholar with (like Fish) a Ph.D. from Yale, who is also known as the diva of Queer Studies. She is small and not very prepossessing-looking, but graduate students all over the country say "diva" at the mere mention of her name. A group of them put out a fan magazine called *Judy!* devoted to chronicling

the way she runs home her "performativity" theory of speech and sexual behavior as forms of anarchy.

"All gender roles are an imitation for which there is no original," runs her most famous paradox. She is even more famous for her convoluted Theoryese. In 1998 the journal *Philosophy and Literature* named her winner of their Bad Writing Contest for a sentence that began, "The move from a structuralist account in which capital is understood to structure social relations in relatively homologous ways to a view of hegemony in which power relations are subject to repetition, convergence, and rearticulation . . ."—and went on for fifty-nine words more. Her zine fans love the insouciant yet erudite way she dismisses such attacks. "Ponderousness," she says, referring to Hegel, "is part of the phenomenological challenge of his text."

The battle of the Fools versus the Young Turks has escalated beyond words, however. In 1987 the traditionalists formed a self-defense organization called the National Association of Scholars; 1,000 joined. In a public statement, Fish, then at Duke, branded them with the *R* word, the *S* word, and the *H* word—racist, sexist, and homophobic—and sent a memo to Duke's provost recommending that no member of the tainted organization be allowed on key university committees. The provost refused. The Scholars accused Fish of trying to blacklist them. At more than one major university, Young Turks roamed about in Gen X clothes, red ballpoint pens at the ready, sniffing out deviationists . . . sexists . . . racists . . . classists (sic) . . . homophobes . . . ethnophobes . . . The stories of Young Turks nudging and whispering to keep graduate students away from Fool courses, to the point where some Fool ends up with zero students for the year, would make a fairly grisly chapter in a book.

In the face of such confidence and agressiveness on the part of the Young Turks and such devotion on the part of their graduate-student T.A. followers, who is left to support a student in her misgivings about "womyn" or any other manifestation of Rococo Marxism? Her other teachers? Some dean? The university's president? The most unlikely of all, believe me, is the president.

Recently I met a student who told me he was taking a cross-disciplinary course entitled Civilizations of North America. "Cross-disciplinary" is a fashionable term in academia just now, not to be confused with the old (Fool) term "interdisciplinary," which refers to the use of concepts from two or more conventional scholarly disciplines to study a particular subject, such as using the concepts of sociology and economics to write history. No, "cross-disciplinary" refers to crossing all disciplines . . . much the way a 747 crosses the North Pole at 40,000 feet above an impenetrable cloud cover . . . on the way to a single destination: Rococo Marxism. So the instructor informs the class that while Americans might have more money, possessions, technological advantages, and conveniences than Mexicans or Canadians, when it comes to "social cleavages"—along the lines of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and regional imbalances—Americans are the primitives. On this subject—life's fundamentals—we need to take lessons at the knees of the Mexicans and the Canadians.

The Canadians? The Mexicans? No kidding? . . . Didn't the French of Quebec province get so bitter about the British majority that they almost seceded from Canada just five years ago? And just six years ago didn't the Indians in Mexico's southernmost province, Chiapas, rise up in an armed rebellion? And gender . . . gosh . . . isn't it an open secret that foreign corporations like to employ women on their assembly lines in Mexico because Mexican women are taught all their lives to submit to male authority? Or am I dreaming?

Shrugging: "Hey, I don't know. That's what he told us."

By now, in the year 2000, that's what anyone is apt to do . . . shrug and go on about his business. For eighty-two years now, America's intellectuals, right on time, as Nietzsche predicted it, have expressed their skepticism toward American life. And, as the French say, "Skepticism soon hardens into con-

"FOOLS HAVE HARDLY TO SHRUG AND ACQUIESCE TO ROCOCO MARXISM because THEY KNOW THAT TO OPPOSE IT OUT LOUD IS IN POOR TASTE

THE [illegible] STORY DOES NOT COMMENCE UNTIL WE BEGIN TO MIX EARLY IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

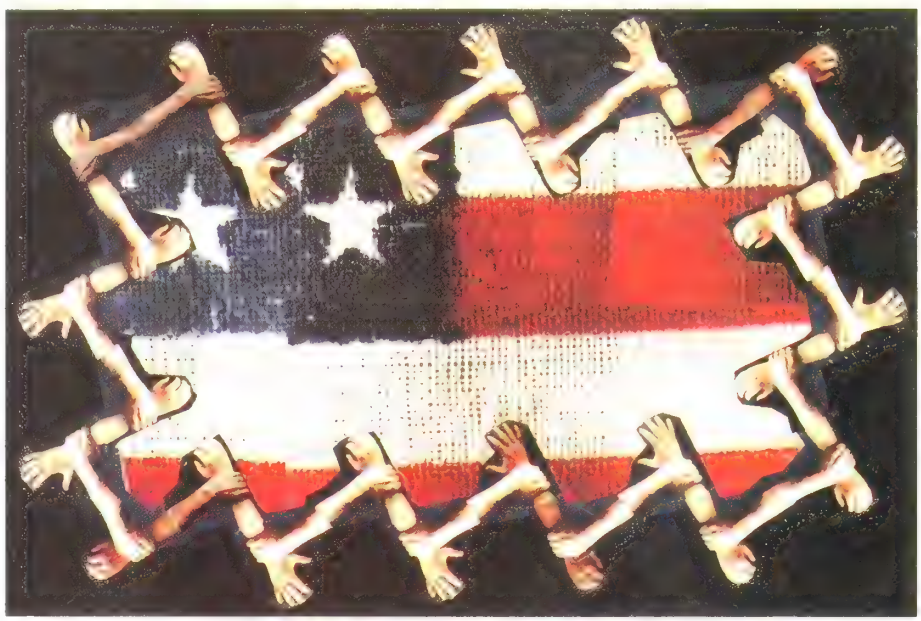
stories [illegible] stories of origins that will connect the Euro-American tale directly to the African-American, the African-American to the Latin-American and Native-American, and so forth, we've allowed competing tales to stand almost unopposed to struggle at last for prominent preeminence, often for temporary preeminence, so that these days, for instance, if one is of Euro-American descent, because of the prevailing economics of communication and other forms of institutionalized racism, it's all too easy to wall off and effectively ghettoize the African-American or Native-American or Asian-American story, diminishing them thereby and denying their application to one's personal and political history. One feels freed to ignore their moral demands and their legitimate claims upon one's deepest attention. On the other hand and by the same token, if one is of African-American descent or Native-American, and so on, one is invited to believe that in telling one's own part of the story one has told the whole of it. As if a single chapter of our national epic, a mere episode, could be substituted for the whole without first being contextualized by the grand democratic American literary project itself and its Homeric originators, Whitman and Twain.

The end result of this ongoing multiracial, multiethnic, multicultural duel has been an incompletely told tale of origins that, if allowed to stand as the story, the whole story, and nothing but the story, is a lie, for we are undeniably a single, creolized people—not separate Native-, African-, European-, Latin-, or Asian-descended peoples. Which is to say that our true story does not commence, Chapter One does not open, until we begin to mix; and we begin mixing very early in the seventeenth century, when Africans and Europeans together make their first landfall in the Americas, there to be greeted warily by the natives in their canoes just offshore and on the beaches, from Newfoundland in the north to Tierra del Fuego in the south.

Publishers and film and television producers, the official disseminators of story, are all guilty of reinforcing this long-ongoing process of making high-walled narrative ghettos. Fiction writers and screenwriters and film directors are guilty also [illegible] insofar as it's in their interest (though it surely does not hurt the financial interests of the infotainment industrialists, the Disneys, News Corps, and Time Warners, and the storytellers themselves, to have both the producers and consumers of information and entertainment broken up into small, noncommunicative, mistrustful colonies of the righteous and the saved: atomization of the marketplace, after all, allows the marketeers to target specific consumer groups with deadly aim). But by and large, American storytellers, we whose work deliberately goes toward the making of America's origin-myths, have all too often allowed ourselves to tell at best only a small part of the story, with our reticence, with our reluctance to tell the whole story, reinforced on the one side by guilt, historical ignorance, and simple denial and on the other by legitimate anger and illegitimate exclusion from the means of communication, and on both sides by simple, natural self-absorption—writers writing about what they "know," readers reading about what's familiar.

All our stories, Euro-, African-, Native-, etc., tend nowadays to be journalistic rather than mythic, made more for a miniseries than in the conscious creation of a truthful national memory. We Euro-American storytellers have for the most part insisted that the story of our origins is an East-to-West story, told either as a multigenerational immigration-and-assimilation family saga or else as a celebration of Manifest Destiny and the tragic triumph of neo-European civilization over the wilderness of the New World: it's either *Goodbye, Columbus* [illegible] its characteristic locale. The themes of guilt and expiation, crime and punishment, however, usually characterize the lives of adults, and thus for African-Americans the main model has been the slave narrative, from Frederick Douglass's autobiography to Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. In this version of our origins, we're given a mostly South-to-North story of physical and spiritual

triumph over dehumanizing oppression, with the struggle to survive fueled to a considerable degree by [illegible] the blues are made into the blues of the roots. And if the Euro-American vision of our origins at its best is [illegible] it probably needs to be, and the African-American [illegible] of heroic endurance, is transcendental, the Native American [illegible] ing for Eden, is elegiac. For Native Americans [illegible] are the children of Nature, their mother [illegible] and their father is the eternal sky above. The chapter that [illegible] with the arrival of the Europeans and Africans [illegible] chapter but so often the last. It is the story that [illegible] the Fall; the loss is not of innocence but of [illegible] Americans, their tales more recently cemented [illegible] the others', are in the process of composing and [illegible] stories, too. And mostly they're followed [illegible] by the rest of us, paths just as narrow as ours, just as separate, without beginning, and leading nowhere. The themes and locales, perhaps as a result of our postmodern, technologically flattened culture, seem more specific to recent social and political history than to their ancestors' eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American origins, more faithful to contemporary demographics than to the historical imagination; and thus they seem to respond more to the cultural priorities and agendas expressed by network news, talk-show hosts, and party politicians than to those expressed by Whitman and Twain.



I don't mean to criticize the contemporary tellers of these tales, many of whom—William Kennedy, Toni Morrison, Louise Erdrich, Maxine Hong Kingston, Rudolfo Anaya—are powerful, deep writers. The point here is that none of them [illegible] self as an American story of origins. Not the most recently told Latino- and Asian-American stories or the old Euro- or African-American or any other hyphenated story of our origins. Although all the tales borrow from one another, structurally and in terms of specific geography and history, they nonetheless make themselves essential to the tellers and the people whose origins they purport to describe by the terms of what they share [illegible] another but of their difference from one another. And it's not merely coincidental that these days, whenever we're met (or described) by the terms *Euro-American*, *Asian-American*, *African-American*, etc., we're eager and able to locate with ease and a certain self-satisfaction what and who is denoted by the word to the left of the hyphen. But if asked to say what or who is denoted by the word to the right of the hyphen, we usually fall into irritated confusion.

What or who *is* an American, anyhow? To answer that question, which is the only truly self-identifying question to which every American must address him- or herself, one normally would turn to one's national story of origins—just as the Greeks, ancient and modern alike, turn to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the Romans to the *Aeneid*, the French to the story of Jeanne d'Arc, the English to the Arthurian legend, the [illegible] to the Ark of the Covenant, the Captivity, and the Return. And so on



So what is our story, the one we all share, regardless of how we label ourselves over on the left side of the hyphen? Do we even *have* a story? After long reflection, I've come to believe that the single defining, linked sequence of stories that all Americans, north, south, and meso-, share, regardless of our racial characteristics or ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the one narrative that we all participate in, is that of the African Diaspora. This is the narrative template against which all the others can be measured, fit into, laid over, or veneered onto. It doesn't matter where in time one enters it—as Faulkner said, "The past isn't dead, it isn't even past"—or from whose point of view it's told. For we have all played different roles in that long, serpentine story, and, depending on our racial characteristics, sometimes we have been victim, sometimes victimizer, sometimes merely horrified, or thrilled, onlooker with something important and self-defining to lose or gain in the outcome. It doesn't matter where it's located. Surely by now we know that there is no town, no county, no state in America that has not been profoundly affected by the events, characters, themes, and values dramatized by the story of race in America. It opens in the early seventeenth century, and it continues today in all the Americas and in Europe too, as a late chapter in the Tale of Empire; and in Asia, as that chapter called the Vietnam War; and in Africa itself, in the chapters that describe Liberia's and Sierra Leone's tragic, ongoing civil wars, for instance. And you don't have to be a prophet to see that, if this is indeed the era of the American Empire, the African Diaspora is a tale with chapters that will be set worldwide, wherever there is an American "presence," well into the next century as well. I might go even further and say that if American culture, from McDonald's to Disney to Nike, in all its subtle and not-so-subtle manifestations, has come to dominate the New World border, and if there is today no truly creolized society left on this earth—that is, no multiracial society in which power is not dispensed according to its citizens' racial characteristics—then we might be able to speak of the universality of the African Diaspora as origin-myth. At least for the foreseeable future.

In its essential outline, it's the story that begins in violence with capture, permanent enslavement, and forced migration, passes into institutionalized racism, and through emancipation rises to a first and false climax, where it undergoes sudden reversal and embittered transformation,

with a few remarkable exceptions like Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, Melville's "Benito Cereno," most of Faulkner, and, in recent years, books like Madison Smartt Bell's *All Souls Rising*, Joyce Carol Oates's *Because It Is Bitter, and Because It Is My Heart*, and Richard Price's *Clockers*, the telling of the story of [illegible] has been left to African-Americans and Afro-Caribbeans. There are many understandable reasons why this is so, and I've tried to point to a few in these pages, but it nonetheless seems clear that the consequences are twofold and harmful to us all. First, we have been deprived of the true sweep and power of this story, which derive from its all-inclusiveness: for it dramatizes the essential, and specifically American, political and moral meaning of every American's life. There is no other like it. A truly democratic story, capable of functioning in our culture as a national epic, it has been made to seem of moment only to *some* of us; that is, only to Americans who identify themselves as *African*-Americans. For those of us who are not of African descent, because the African Diaspora is not, after all, viewed as *our* story but *theirs*, a second harmful consequence is that we have been allowed to shrug off the deep, connecting complexity of our ongoing culpability and witness. We are "enabled" (as they say in 12-step programs) in our guilty desire to reject any self-informing, self-identifying role for *us* in that story. And this in turn invites all of us hyphenated Americans to separate our historical strands one at a time from the braided destiny of a Creole Nation, leading ultimately to its unraveling and to the establishment of a mere population instead of a people.

[illegible] becoming a Balkanized cluster of small colonies of the separately [illegible] Already we can see white writers in America getting whiter, as it were, especially among the youngest generation of novelists and story writers, who appear increasingly to live in the literary equivalent of a racially segregated, gated community. Consider, for instance, the works of the most gifted and ambitious of the newest generation of novelists: Michael Cunningham, Rick Moody, and David Foster Wallace. And black writers appear to be getting blacker; even the best of them have shown an increasing tendency to preach to the choir (Toni Morrison's last two novels, *Jazz* and *Paradise*, for instance, have higher walls around them than did the more inclusive *Beloved* and *Song of Solomon*). Maybe it's payback time. But whatever the reason, most non-white writers—African-, Asian-, Latino-, and Native- alike—seem reluctant to tell stories about the *rest* of us; while most white writers have simply become frightened, as if it were politically incorrect, to tell stories about anyone but themselves.

Writers and readers of every cultural, ethnic, and racial stripe are encouraged in this process of self-imposed ghettoization by the publishing industry and the entertainment conglomerates, to whom literature is a product and readers but consumers. The more easily both product and consumer can be identified by their cultural, ethnic, and racial characteristics, the more easily their buying habits can be predicted, manipulated, and [illegible]lled. We can commence our resistance to that control now, however, [illegible]deliberately ending our reluctance to tell the story of our common origins—the story that, simply by means of its telling, would liberate us from our shared bloody history. If we cannot do that, we will each end up with a private racial fantasy of violence that keeps us in thrall to it and with a [illegible]nal literature that's manufactured by and for the marketplace.

I take it as a given that our best and most ambitious fiction writers are those [illegible]se sense of purpose is guided by a desire to participate in the making of a national literature. My hope is that this ongoing, 200-year-old project will provide us a truly democratic literature, one that has at its center the historical and moral facts of creolization and that therefore both honors our people's highest standards for our treatment of one another and does not in the process lie about our tragic failure to meet those standards. ■

BLOOD ON THE TRACKS

Does senseless death reveal God, or His absence?

BY MARK SLOUKA

Now and again the parallel world of unspeakable things breaks through. A man walks into a schoolyard with a rifle, a taxi leaps a curb, an entire neighborhood folds into rubble. Those directly involved are devoured. The rest, like ruminants slowing to browse once the victim has been culled from the herd, step past the tangle of muscle and bone, the raised, incomprehensible muzzle, and move on. It's been thus since hand in hand we wandered out of paradise.

But if the stories haven't changed, the method of their publication has. Tragedy carries farther in the charged air of the early twenty-first century; death speaks with a louder voice. In Ankara, Turkey, a father unable to get the heavy equipment to move the earthquake rubble listens to his daughter die for two days — and we listen with him. In a town near Albany, a mother tortures her three-year-old to death for taking a piece of candy without asking first — and we read about it over our morning Danish. In Peru, Colombia, a father digs his son out of an ocean of mud, then reburies him in a common grave, and the image of his grief — the mud caked in the hair on his chest, the face broken by weeping — stabs us quickly in the heart on the 7:43 and again halfway through the morning meeting. And so on and so on, ad nauseam, ad absurdum. Soft-shelled and transparent in our vulnerability, we press the button, turn the page, swaddle ourselves in layers of irony. Or try.

Our connectedness, it seems, is engineering something new for us: a need, a hunger, that cannot be satisfied, an existential dilemma fully worthy of Kafka. Unable to ignore the daily parade of bodies left at our doors courtesy of the networks or the newspaper of record or the many offices of the dot-com world, we are being forced to ask the kind of questions — "How could this happen?" "What does it mean?" — that we in the West haven't had to ask on such a regular basis since the seventeenth century.

The cracking we hear now is the sound of a great metaphysical wedge being driven into a predominantly materialistic culture. Daily our media drag us to God, force us to inquire after His meaning, then rub our noses in His absence. No one is exempt; even those of us given to wine without metaphor

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You say I'm ignoring the multitudes for whom the words "It is God's will" provide all the comfort and explanation necessary? Perhaps, but I am not the first to wonder at the ease with which [illegible] (from Augustine ("The ways of the Lord are unknowable to man"). The nights grow longer. Let us cuddle, like partridges in their [illegible] and preen their downy feathers; I wish them warmth and well. This is for the less-insulated. We're at aphelion, the farthest distance from the sun. The orbit has broken.

II

At [illegible] on Monday, May 24, 1999, twenty-three minutes after what would have been a [illegible] that [illegible] that evening [illegible] in New England, Amtrak's [illegible] *Twilight Shoreliner*, train number 67, departed Boston for Newport News, Virginia.

At 12:55 [illegible], after two hours delayed by [illegible] due to violent weather, it left Providence for stops in Connecticut.

At 2:24 [illegible] the ten-car Shoreliner, traveling 71 mph and carrying 209 passengers, struck five people walking on the tracks near the North Benson Road overpass in Fairfield. Julia Toledo, an Ecuadoran immigrant, and her sons Angel, six, Carlos, eleven, and Pedro, three, died instantly. The fourth son, Jose, ten, survived for another two days.

By the time Jose Urgiles de Toledo died at Bridgeport Hospital, the chronology of events leading to the tragedy had been established. Sometime after 9:00 P.M. that Monday night, according to the *Connecticut Post*, Julia Toledo and her sons left the YMCA Families in Transition shelter on Clinton Avenue. The three older boys carried backpacks stuffed with clothes, coloring books, pencils, and *Sesame Street* dolls. Pedro, too young to walk the entire distance, was probably carried a good part of the way by his mother.

After leaving the shelter unnoticed, the family most likely turned right down Railroad Avenue where it runs below the raised railbed. No one noticed them, though the area around Railroad Avenue is badly lit and silent. Several blocks farther down, where crumbling, weedy slopes replace the walls of the raised railbed, the family climbed a short, steep trail to a break in the chain-link fence and entered the tracks.

Even if the rolling slope of the railbed were to adults, the ballast gravel [illegible] and treacherous, they must have walked along the tracks for nearly two miles, the older children jumping from tie to tie, until the *Shoreliner*, sprung from Providence, erased them from the earth.

The facts, of course, were not enough. They could never be enough. In truth, the amassing of details that began immediately following the tragedy was nothing more than a hastily constructed bridgework—desperate, instinctive—[illegible] people who needed truth in the visible world, the world of measurable distances and discernible motivations. A people still accustomed to assuming that representation confers meaning. That meaning is there, somewhere, if we can find it.

Among the scenes in the *Connecticut Post* complete with a box showing a train with an arrow bearing down on a group of five black dots, suggested the full depth of the failure. Emergency workers arriving at the point on the [illegible] "were [illegible] and [illegible] would have been sickened by the carnage," according to [illegible]. The train's steel structure, with its red, [illegible] was splashed with [illegible]. Scattered over a wide area were the children's shoes, their torn backpacks, a bloody Bible, and the *Sesame Street* dolls the older boys had packed for the journey. No, no number [illegible] could suffice. The [illegible] were not enough. We wanted to "help." Better still, a "w[illegible]."

[illegible] and [illegible] tracked the [illegible] to Julia Justiliano, a crossing guard, told [illegible] Carlos Urgiles had been abusive, Julia Justiliano, a crossing guard, told [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

ore abandoning his family, he had had to be forcibly removed from the
roperty of Luis Muñoz Marín School after attempting to steal his own child
ren. The conclusion was obvious, even welcome. Julia Toledo ever cared
racks with her family that night because she was running from her fate?
Because she was afraid.

His narrative began to crumble when reporters in Bridgeport located Ureña
mmsett—dark-haired, thin, with the boot-leather body and the premature stoop
of a lifelong laborer—in the small Andean town of Cojitambo, penniless
nd 3,000 miles from Bridgeport. Shattered by the news, he told reporters that
is Catholicism had caused tensions with his in-laws (former Catholics con
erted to the Church of Latter-day Saints) and that they had forced him to
eave the country. They had hidden his children before he left. He had gone
o Luis Muñoz Marín School out of desperation, he said, not to steal his sons
ut to try to say good-bye to them.
I have a great pain in my chest,"
e sobbed during an interview
with a TV station in Quito.

The crosshairs now shifted to
Toledo's sister, Maria, who owned
he Shelton Street house in which
ulia and her sons had rented an
partment. Toledo's family, grow
ng tired of the burden Julia and
er children imposed on them,
eportedly had refused to help
with the baby-sitting. From that
oint on, the angle of decline
steepened. Unable to afford child
are, Toledo was forced to quit
er job cleaning rooms at Fair
ield University. Relations be
ween the sisters deteriorated.
Forced to the wall, Julia Toledo
roved her family into the shelter.



But blaming Maria and her re
ations availed us nothing. Even
f, as neighbors claimed, Maria
ad ordered her sister to leave her apartment, had forced her, in effect, into the homeless shelter, the fact remained that she had not forced her to leave
hat night or to climb with her children onto the tracks. We might not like
Maria Toledo, might even accuse her, with some justification, of heartless
ess, but to blame her would be absurd. Another narrative, straining for clo
ure, ended in mid-sentence.

As did all the others. Toxicology reports determined that drugs did not
lay a role. The train was traveling below the speed limit for the area. The
ngineer was sober, devastated, blameless. Suicide? Maria Toledo's claim that
er sister had been unstable was refuted by all who had known Julia in the
weeks before she died. The composite portrait that emerged from their de
criptions showed a woman full of hope, a survivor, a devoted mother capable
f bringing a sense of play and possibility into a life of considerable hardship.
All at Caroline House remembered Toledo triumphantly marching in for the
Christmas party with a turkey on a platter, her four boys behind her. "De
spite her poverty and the problems she had," Sister Maureen told reporters,
she would make a game out of it with her children."

Reconstructions of the event by the Connecticut Department of Trans
ortation and the M.T.A. Police Authority also spoke against suicide. Just be
ore they were hit, Toledo and three of her sons were on the south side of
Track 3. A fourth son was on the north side. He was crossing over to meet
hem when the Amtrak blew its horn. Julia Toledo, her three sons in tow,
as lunging to save him when they died.

The official explanation for the Bridgeport and Metro-North commuter trains during rush hour that Tuesday morning and scattered delays that afternoon and evening. By Wednesday, Metro-North service had returned to normal. And yet, for a moment, the tragedy had touched a collective nerve, sent a quick spasm through the virtual community. There was no narrative here, no evangelist. We'd been given a few remote pieces—all scattered reports and slippery mediators, nothing at all personal—held together by nothing more substantial than the fact of its existence and its claim on our attention. An effect without cause, in other words. An apocalypse, writ small. A nightmare of reason and faith alike. It didn't sit well.

The official explainers, trying to make sense of God's purpose in the whole business, gave it a brave attempt, then retreated to safety. "He calls us into relationships with the dispossessed . . . with all those who cry out to God," assayed the Reverend Andrew Garavel, apparently untroubled by the curious notion that the dispossessed should pay for our attention with their lives. Yet at some point even the Reverend Garavel at the memorial mass at Fairfield University, perhaps sensing the porousness of the shelter he offered, was forced to seek deeper cover. The ways of God are unknowable to man, he admitted. "There are things we cannot fully understand. We are a mystery to ourselves and a mystery to one another. If we are that complicated, can we expect God to be any less so?"



To which we might respond, "No, indeed," then counter with a not unreasonable question in return: What good is a God as inscrutable to ourselves, in truth, whose purpose we can no longer divine? Not much, unless, that is, the Almighty's inscrutability were to conceal a cruelty, a whimsy, as profound as our own.

Earlier in this century, wishing to explore the question of whether human beings could behave without cause, the French novelist André Gide came up with the notion of the *acte gratuit*—the gratuitous act, the motiveless crime. Gide's concept, it seems to me, would have fit the Reverend Garavel's message perfectly. To dramatize his notion that a crime could be truly motiveless, Gide had a character, out of no malice and for no reason whatsoever, spontaneously push a businessman he'd never met in the path of a moving train. Risk the analogy: On May 24, God pushed Julia Toledo and her four sons. It's as good an explanation as any.

III

When I first heard Julia Toledo's name, I lived in Leucadia, California, a town rich in boysenberry and meth amphetamine, like most of the hundred feet from unprotected tracks that ran like a sutured cut from Ensenada to the Bay. The trains were as much a part of my life as the eucalyptus trees and the Santa Ana winds. My son had lived with them for [illegible] of her life. They'd make us jump—[illegible] Diamond Bar approaching the Leucadia Boulevard intersection, then bend, ever so slightly, sickeningly, down Christian Doppler's

cafés and sitting at the dinner table we could distinguish the deep, steady hum of the big freights from the rapid chatter of the commuter. Sometimes, late at night, walking out to the local store for milk, we'd see a headlight flicker by. Well lit and sad, it seemed filled with exiles from an ill-kept hopper pointing.

Our trains were not the Guthries', father's or son's. Not long after we arrived in California, my wife and I woke to a noise like the howling of a mastiff in a vise. I made it to the window just in time to see our neighbor, a good-natured man who had talked to me just the afternoon before about the advantages of delivering pizza, stagger down the walk and into his apartment. His beloved German shepherd, I discovered, had run onto the tracks facing the other direction, gobbling something between the ties. It didn't hear the electric locomotive—so much quieter than diesel—silently on the smooth, welded rails, didn't respond to its owner's increasingly frantic calls. The dog wasn't smashed, he told me much later, the horror somehow reduced to this one fact above all others; the creature simply disappeared—as though the train were some kind of eraser, the dog he'd known for years but a sketch on a child's slate.

There were other times when the tracks crossed our lives. Some months later a northbound freight slammed into an eighteen-wheeler that had grounded out on the crossing with a concussion so terrific that half a mile away I spilled my coffee all over my desk. I found half the truck like a scissored beetle at the intersection, the other half at the end of a three-hundred-yard trench dug into the rocks and wild melon vines of the railbed. Seeing how things were, the driver had bailed out and watched from the road as the engineer, trying to stop what couldn't be stopped, rode the thing a full quarter mile to the moment everyone knew must come. He lived.

Others did not. Fairly regularly, somewhere along the line, the trains that punctuated the hours of our days passed through men like a stick through an egg: men walking to the canyons to sleep, men thick with tequila, men, like the four that died together one night, playing cards on the ties. I'd seen the warning signs on Highway 5—the stenciled silhouettes not of a leaping deer or elk but of a migrant family running across a road, a man dragging a woman, dragging a little girl nearly airborne like the tail of a kite—but the signs were in the wrong place. It was the locomotive, appropriately enough—that grand, nineteenth-century emblem of our imperial reach, our elect status—that killed them. After a day spent moving the Anglos' dirt or muscling trees with hundred-pound rootballs into the desert soil, they went down before the iron horse, symbol of God's approbation and love for us, not them. Destiny made manifest.

I knew these things—it would have been impossible not to—and yet, and this is the point, there was time enough, life enough, separating one incident from the next, large tragedies from small, that I was able to keep them and the questions they brought with them at bay. My life, the dough of my days, folded them in. Our neighbor became our friend, played with our children, brought another dog home from the pound, and grew to love it. Little boys threw sticks in the trench, dogs peed in it. Eventually the city covered it up. The men who died on the tracks were strangers to me; I knew neither their faces nor their stories.

Julia Toledo's death, though distant, cut closer to home. Like tens of thousands of others, I didn't know she had lived until the day the news, traveling through the threads and ganglia of the nation's web, told me she had died. Three thousand miles away, preparing to move east (my destiny no longer manifest), I heard about her life, saw her face and the faces of her sons, and felt that in a world of unspeakable wrongs, some manner of crime had been committed. A crime as gratuitous as it was wretched. A crime, like so many others, that demanded a wider reckoning.

I traveled to Connecticut. I walked the tracks at night as the trains came rushing out of the north like great, speeding walls. There was nothing to know, no one to speak to.

IV

During the American Civil War, observers noted a curious fact: the sounds of a battle, clearly distinguishable at ten miles, could be utterly inaudible at two. These weird wrinkles in the landscape were called "acoustic shadows." Modernize the phenomenon, let it expand into metaphor, and perhaps it would help explain why the other America, the one living below the embankment, behind the Lucky's supermarket) in the very shadow of our prosperity

I went to Connecticut expecting neither revelation nor redemption. I did not go hoping to experience that frisson of tragedy that can help the emotionally stunted feel alive. Hardly a member of the overclass, I had no specific sin for which I felt the need to atone. I went, I suppose, because certain odd details—the red, white, and blue logo of the Amtrak locomotive, spattered with blood, or the red, white, and blue lettering of the Memorial Day edition of the *Connecticut Post* that reported Toledo's death—seemed to suggest some wider meaning. I went, at least in part, to conduct a kind of inquest, not of the dead but of the land they had died in, to report on what I sensed to be our many sins of omission, committed daily, from sea to shining sea.

I was not unfamiliar with the dark side of American exceptionalism. In the California I had left, entire towns constructed of plastic sheeting and cardboard could be found hidden in canyons only a quick walk from some of the priciest real estate in the Western Hemisphere. Julia Toledo, I realized, had more in common with the migrants who somehow daily emerged from the mud and the manzanita brush, miraculously shaved and cleaned, than she did with the people she worked for. Like them, she had lived in the shadow. Only her death—and that only for a short time—had made her visible.

After midnight the area between Clinton Avenue and the tracks in Bridgeport is not a good place. There is little light. Plywood boards cover broken windows, shattered walls. I walked quickly past a group of men standing by a brick building, then took a right onto Railroad Avenue, a narrow, buckled road with weeds coming through the cracks that runs tight and dark against the brownstone wall of the raised railbed. I was halfway down Railroad Avenue when the full reality dawned on me: they had walked through this wasteland of abandoned warehouses and vacant lots at almost the same time. I could see them, stepping around the piles of moldering furniture and broken brick and crushed Styrofoam boxes, walking past the papers and trash glued to the wall like [illegible]

They had been afraid. I knew that now, and their fear frightened me. Beyond the circle of wire I could make out odd, bristling shapes (hills of twisted pipe and scrap lumber) and wondered, for a moment, how they must have looked to children no older than my own. I didn't like Railroad Avenue—the darkness of it, the glass and gravel crunching underfoot—and I knew many times they'd been glad to leave it. Compared with what lay behind, the yellow billboard advertising McDonald's bagel sandwiches for breakfast, even the blue railroad trestle in the dark overhead, must have [illegible]

I climbed the stonelike steps of the bridgework to the trestle, squeezed through the foot-wide gap between the fencing and the bridge (the three bagels, huge and yellow, now only an arm's length away), and entered the tracks. The traprock embankment made for difficult walking. About a mile down, tired of stumbling, I moved up to the track, and thoroughly spooked, glancing continually over my shoulder like a man afraid of ghosts, I walked onto the North Benson Road overpass where the accident had occurred.

There was nothing there. Like everyone else, I suppose, I'd wanted a narrative, an explanation. I'd found none. Some measure of guilt—vast, disembodied, cultural—yes. But nothing to explain the magnitude of what

had occurred over the Benson Street overpass on the night of May 4. I placed a couple of railroad spikes, heavy and crude as Roman nails, on the rail and seemed to charge with current, and suddenly the train was there, already flying by, gone. I stood for a while in the silence it left behind, then began the long walk back.

V

On Sunday, July 8, 1741, Jonathan Edwards, first of the great New England Calvinists, preached a sermon at Enfield, Connecticut, less than seventy miles from what was then the thriving fishing community of Bridgeport. A spare, almost delicate man, he waited for the knock and scrape of boot soles to still, for the sawing of insects to rise again, and began. His voice that morning, according to an account left by the Reverend Eleazar Wheelock, was level, clearly modulated. He held the small sermon book in his left hand, carefully turning the pages with his right.

The sermon left the audience hysterical. God was angry, Edwards told them, tried beyond all measure. The whirlwind of their destruction would come at any moment, was already overdue, they all—the farmers with the sunburned hands, their stolid wives, and frightened children—would be as the chaff on the summer threshing floor.



And he reminded them of the full ferocity of God's wrath ("And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire"), of His eagerness, tempered only by His sovereign will, to make the fallen suffer: "I will tread them in mine anger, and will trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment."

Edwards's sermon that morning contained the only extended metaphor he would ever use, a tidbit of literary history I find strangely eloquent. "The bow of God's wrath is bent," he told the small congregation of weeping sinners, "and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood."

Meaning is made, not discovered, and the materials from which it is molded can be very small indeed, a footnote can be the button, the joint, that moves the arm of history. Set in context, made to speak, it can allow the past to touch the present, link the living to the dead. Edwards's bloody metaphor, its point properly honed, should extend to the turn of the millennium. It doesn't. Which is precisely what makes it significant to us.

In 1741, in Enfield, the arrow trembling on the string could both explain our tragedies and terrify us to righteousness. Two and a half centuries later, it can do neither. It is a metaphor, nothing more; a gremlin in a disenchanted world; a spook-house prop. The problem, as always, is the actual blood. It's real enough. And it requires an explanation. A context, a story.

Where do we turn? Lacking God, should we reacquaint ourselves perhaps with His fallen Other? The pagan god gone bad, his horn and hoof retained,

"fe-fi-fo-fum" or "the better to hear you with, my dear." No, something old-

(distant progenitor of all things diabolical), for example, meant "to tear apart, to rend."

ming in the wind; the monsters and fairies, half-crayoned in. Neither God nor

VI

For millennia death stayed close. Life was like a Poussin landscape: tucked to the side, arbored by vines, was a small, yellow skull, Virgil's quaint reminder, *Et in Arcadia Ego*—"I too am in the garden"—scrawled across the pigment beneath. The memento mori was redundant, of course, possibly cruel; we needed no reminding. We died like midges in October, of infections and colds and tainted milk, and succored ourselves with God, with the knowledge that the causes of our grief, however inscrutable, were after

Well into the nineteenth century, in other words, we lived in a legible universe, the record of our days—and their meaning—running like a never-

didactic and was to be studied because it was the providence of God in operation. "When a man lookes on the great volume of the world," wrote Puritan divine John Preston, "there those things which God will have known, are written in capitall letters." In seventeenth-century New England, as in the Paris of Louis XIII and his court painter, Poussin, life was the text—a living, breathing allegory—and God was the author.

Something changed. Our lot improved. Death, though still and forever in the garden, was pushed to the margins. And God, reluctantly, went with it. Having washed our hands of blood (dinner now arrived without the quick crack of bone or the "thup" of the stick on the rabbit's neck), having pushed even our own deaths offstage, to the quiet ghettos and discreetly lit reservations deemed appropriate to such unpleasantness, we allowed the myth that gave blood meaning to slip quietly into something like obsolescence. It became, slowly, inexorably, an anachronism: the metaphysical equivalent of the moldboard plow.

and I, for one, harbor no hidden nostalgia for the golden age of death's do-

humility and suffering that made it bearable. But, alas, that's not the end of the story. At the turn of the new millennium, appropriately enough, thanks to the wonder-working providences

Death is once again a daily companion

the week, and there is Poussin's skull, set among the harvest of the burgeoning market. Like an icon we can neither override

"*Et in Arcadia Ego*," it whispers—

from the columns adjoining the cashmere and the

Milwaukee, you fuckers. Turn the

Delete me.

A mother and four sons have died in

We touch for the myth. But we've forgotten how to read. And we've forgotten how to believe. And the text has gone dark. And the author, whoever he was, if he

and absence are giving birth to something new: a bloodier God,

■

DISPATCHES FROM

A SESQUICENTENNIAL SYMPOSIUM

INTRODUCTION

BY ROBERT STONE

THERE EXISTS NO RELIABLE CONsensus about how we should approach the world as it was when *Harper's Magazine* began publishing 150 years ago. The apparent familiarity of the landscape and the relative proximity in time deceive. The period recedes into the costume pageant of history, yet its causes, eccentric notions, and strivings still rouse us. Because of the unresolved dilemmas, because ideas conceived then are still playing themselves out, the years just prior to the Civil War have not been safely confined to the page or defined in collective memory.

From time to time a figure appears through the mist, instantly recognizable in contemporary terms. Edward Everett, Unitarian divine, champion orator, and, by 1850, former president of Harvard, is such a man. How contemporary a figure is Everett? Consider this: in a speech delivered during his single term as United States senator from Massachusetts, Everett proclaimed, "The United States has solved all the major problems of mankind." Yet the good, wise senator felt that he could not really take a position on the slavery question. Why dwell on marginal social flaws when you've solved all the problems of mankind?

What *all*? In his irrepressible waffling and burbling, Everett is revealed as a man far ahead of his time, a man for today. Long before the afternoon when Ronald Reagan stepped off the silver screen to proclaim morning in America, Everett was peddling uncomprehending chortles and feel-good pixie dust to his countrymen. An early contributor to *Harper's Magazine*, the senator would have been a champion fund-raiser too, even his sage balancing of inviolable property rights against wild-eyed do-goodism. His more lettered age preferred fruity orotundity in a public figure, and Everett tried throughout his career to oblige. He would be particularly obliging at Gettysburg on the autumn day when he joined the president to dedicate the National Cemetery there. Manfully overcoming his reticence on divisive issues and his low tolerance for conflict, Everett would speak for two hours. It is impossible now to discover what he said. No doubt he latched on to the affirmative. (Famously, his marathon was followed by some brief remarks by President Lincoln. The part in Lincoln's address about the world little noting nor long remembering what was said there must have smarted a mite, as Dorchester's happy warrior helped himself to ice water after all that time on his feet.)

How Senator Everett reaches out to us from the past! The present political culture seems unlikely to bring forth another Lincoln. But an Edward Everett? Anytime. His America, especially in the antebellum years, harbored not merely a bluster familiar to our own but also considerable energy for social experiment. Possibility, then as now, was a bitch goddess, but its shapes in the first half of the nineteenth century could be wonderfully idealistic. In the years before the Civil War

of the most distinguished talent in the country [illegible] wave of utopian reform and revolution that makes the community-mindedness and anticapitalist reaction of the 1960s seem a pale reflection. Fired by the Second Great Awakening, a source of revolutionary energy from Mother Lee and the Shakers of Watervliet to Anna Louise Strong and the Seattle General Strike, collectives dedicated to economic and sexual reform abounded. Nathaniel Hawthorne fictionalized his own stay at Brook Farm in *The Blithedale Romance*. Louisa May Alcott's father, Amos Bronson Alcott, raised his daughter at the visionary Fruitlands Settlement. The Oneida Community flourished with its theocratic-technocratic scheme for the "best development of the heart, mind and body," a program involving innovations such as the graham cracker and what our forebears called "free love," facilitated by coitus interruptus.

When the Friends of Universal Reform assembled in Boston to save America from itself, Ralph Waldo Emerson described the scene: "Madmen, madwomen, men with beards, Dunkers, Muggletonians, Come-outers, Groaners, Agrarians, Seventh-day Baptists, Quakers, Abolitionists, Calvinists, Unitarians, and Philosophers—all came successively to the top and seized their moment, if not their hour, wherein to chide, pray or protest."

While the grossly entrepreneurial society that would explode into being after the Civil War was gathering force, the literary and artistic impulses of the period were dead set against Mammon. The canvases of Thomas Cole and Frederic Church tried to spiritualize the American landscape, though Church ended up as a showman, exhibiting his gargantuan paintings in public halls, where a dime bought the masses fifteen minutes of contemplation, encouraged by potted palms and an organist. Unbounded, experimental, intoxicated with the promise of freedom, the mischievously egotistical and romantic libertinism of Whitman looked toward transcendent democracy, a politics of personal freedom for which it is difficult to find a contemporary parallel outside the United States. Poe's gorgeous, overwrought poems and tales seem to come from anywhere but a land of prosaic factors and sharpers. At the same time, the work of Hawthorne and Melville cast the shadow of America's inner life, the side of the national consciousness that had always been, and would always be, present along with the hustle, huckstering, hoopla, and glitz.

Hoping to extend that shadow by degrees, and thereby to learn something more of the America—indeed, the world—into which their publication was born, the editors of *Harper's Magazine* asked a handful of distinguished authors to bring their talents to bear on the year 1850. At times familiar, often surprising, always imaginative, what follows are the replies to that invitation.

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REFLECTIONS OF TITUS BASFIELD, APRIL 1850

BY JAMES ALAN McPHERSON

. . . *Mud!* Mon Mudes MUDS WADS Mr's and mud Mr Lewton, the lawyer, and Mr John Castell, and twenty others from Cadiz, are going West on the road for the gold mines at California. They plan to go across land by way of Independence, Missouri. The Cadiz Brass Band is accompanying them as far as the National Road at St Clairsville, Ohio. These twenty men are a mixture of "high heels" and "flat foots," but they have banded together because of the lure of the enterprise. I think there is something in human nature that admires the leveling imposed by a parade. Such processions are becoming "all the go" in our time. Earlier today the Odd Fellows paraded. Four of them Fellowships carried the Ark, another carried the Key, and another carried the Golden Beehive. The Knights Templar marched behind them, their clothes trimmed with gold braids.

Processions. I choose sometimes to walk to St Clairsville and stand by the bed of Mr. Albert Gallatin's roadway and observe the processions going East and West. While the stench of privies is much more pungent near that route, especially near the tollhouses, such a discomfort is more than compensated for by the spectacle. And from first light to midnight one can observe them trudging Eastward up the road toward Pennsylvania and Westward to points far, far beyond Wheeling. I have heard some call Mr. Gallatin's roadway the Cumberland Road and also the National Road because, while each village is eager to claim it as its own, there are ambitions, within the counsels of Washington City, to extend it beyond Missouri and Indiana to the Western Territories. Some say it will become eventually the American *via via*. It seems quite possible that this ambition will thrive. Today there are a growing number of tollhouses, and Mr. Reeside's "June Bugs" and "Good Intent" stagecoach lines, going East and West on that road, are frequent sight.

Eliza Davidson came off the road to visit and to get to bring reports about the new tollhouses and runaways that have but recently come off the road at Mount Pleasant. I delight in conversing



with her because she, like myself, is deeply schooled in the flavors of both the colored and the white societies. We both are "flat feet in high heels." For my own part, I have taken care to cultivate that facility ever since my first day of infancy ended and I began to make my way in the world. But she is a student at Franklin College. Such a person can become a fount of intimacies, much like Eliza. She is a servant in the Carter home in Albany, in Athens County. She has told me that George, the younger Carter boy, has grown amorous in his courtship. He has never let his eye on Mary Jane, the daughter of Alexander Holland, and a true "high heel." Eliza said she could not rule. I have the boy to his word, determined, the truth, that there are many [illegible] more "flat feet," albeit enhanced [illegible]



Effects of the Fugitive-Slave-Law

close by Mr. Edwin Stanton's law office. My old friend and classmate at Franklin, John A. Bingham, has told me of Mr. Stanton's plans, and his

Still, here and there some passerby might pause

Still they wander Westward from the dead remnants of Franklin. They lasted there, since the Constitution, only two or three generations, and I have heard the states of Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia reclaimed their old territories. These wanderers from Franklin are a colorful lot. They resemble the shiftless "corncrackers," the hard-boiled desperadoes of the Tennessee Mountains. Some speak of founding a republic in the Southwest, one in which they will be let alone to pursue their own purposes. They and their families drive before them droves of horses and Kentucky mules, cattle from Illinois, merino sheep, Indiana hogs, Pennsylvania turkeys. All for them is flux. They are stateless people.

When I studied at Franklin College in New Athens, I often compared this road, in my imagination, to the *Magnus Via*. That Great Road of ancient times ran from the Hellespont and Byzantium to Aleppo and Mesopotamia and Ur, with connecting routes to Cairo and Carthage and Spain. Many, many centuries of human history—men and camels and elephants and trade goods and food and wine—traversed this road. Almost every personage prominent in history breathed in its dust: Hammurabi, Ramses, the Queen of Sheba, Cyrus the Great, Alexander the Great, Caesar, Pompey the Great, Marco Polo, Napoleon. I was very fortunate at Franklin to have had access to the best writings of the classical world and of the Scottish Enlightenment. I realize now, as a mature colored man, that there is little practical use for my knowledge except as fuel for my imagination. And so I like to test my perceptions by imagining things otherwise than as they actually are. So I study the National Road and its travelers, looking for a likeness of Alexander of Macedon or of Pompey the Great. I employ Mr. Hume's and Mr. Reid's common-sense philosophy to help reconstruct

while I believe as a good Presbyterian, that God is the very first causative principle, I also believe

interior insight as to allow the person to imagine

what should be, what ought to be. I endeavor to practice this wherever I can. Some weeks ago, for example, I was allowed to view the displays of a mesmerist at the Cadiz County Court House. A constable permitted me to stand by the door and listen in on the lecture on the new Science of Animal Magnetism and Mesmerism. Some of the village people held galvanic batteries, which they were ordered to stare at with intensity for a period of time. Then the mesmerist commanded them to obey whatever command he gave. I was not at all surprised that each did what he was told. This display seemed to me to be a practical test of Mr. Reid's theory of natural language: whether there are moral powers within us to help shape our perceptions of the outside world. The mesmerist, by putting this natural force in check, was able to impose on his subjects, through artificial language, purposes and meanings that were not their own. In short, they were led to listen to an outside counsel as to what and how to see and do, rather than listening to an inside counsel, one prompted by internal pictures and associations, in such matters. So too the legend of the "ghost" who parades about the village at night. It has been described as a giant, big old woman, one with great green eyes, with long white hair hanging down her back to her waist. She is said to wander the village streets with a white sheet wrapped around her. For some reason, she always chases young girls who are abroad at such late times. My practical sense informs me that the "ghost" is really a man, one who, for his own reasons, has chosen to don such a costume in order to keep the village girls chaste.

No doubt the saddest "ghosts" who pass by on the National Road are the bondmen, roped together in gangs, fiercely watched over by white men with long snake whips on horseback. I tend to not look into the eyes of the bondmen because what I see within them—a true death in life—always frightens me. I know well their selfsame fate. If they are being driven East on the National Road, I know that they are mostly fugitives who, under the new Law, have been reclaimed. If they are being driven Westward along that road, I know that they have never dared to claim the intoxicating air of freedom. Often, one of the "herders" will pause astride his horse and stare directly at me standing by the roadside. Fixated on me, a seemingly "free" colored man, he will swell up inside himself, seemingly striving to become much more daunting and powerful in his dreadful contemplation of me. His body language, his natural language, would penetrate my imagination, and among the stock of portraits I have amassed therein I impose *one* on the demeanor of the "herder." It is the portrait of Achilles going into a state of *aristeia*—that trance-like mental state that bespeaks connections with the gods. That is the means by which [illegible] even the lowest of white men into the dirt at my feet. To have no home beyond [illegible] To have no interest but the [illegible] To belong to nothing save the reflected glory of

TO THE EDITOR OF THE LONDON *TIMES*

Rochester, June 21, 1850

Sir,

Although I fear it may be an unwarranted intrusion upon your time and attention on my part, I must yield to the strong desire which moves me to thank you, in the name of justice and humanity, for your timely remarks in *The Times* of June 11, on the subject of American slavery, and more especially for your animadversions on the brutal assault made upon me by a mob while I was quietly and inoffensively walking on the Battery at New York.

The influence exerted upon the more intelligent class of the American people by the judicious expression of British sense of justice and humanity is immense, and, I believe, highly beneficial.

The outrage committed upon me in New York was the work of low and vicious people. Yet, Sir, you were perfectly right in taking that outrage, as a fair illustration of the bitter antipathy which is entertained here, even by the better class of white people, against coloured persons. Polished American gentlemen would applaud a deed of ruffianism like the one in question, although they might shrink from the performance of the deed itself. My offence is alleged to be that of walking down Broadway in company of "two white women." This, however, is not a fair statement of the offence. My offence was that I walked down Broadway, in company with white persons, on terms of equality. Had I been with those persons simply as a servant and not as a friend, I should have been regarded with complacency by the refined and with respect by the vulgar class of white persons who throng that great thoroughfare. The clamour here about human equality is meaningless. We have here an aristocracy of skin, with which if a man be covered, and can keep out of the state prisons, he possesses the high privilege of insulting a coloured man with the most perfect impunity. This class of aristocrats are never more displeased than when they meet with an intelligent coloured man. They recognize in him a contradiction to their ungenerous and unsound theories respecting the Negro race, and not being able to reason him down to a level with the brute, they use brute force to knock him down to the desired level. I am, perhaps, trespassing too long upon your time, and although it may be a small matter to you as to how I may feel with respect to your noble defence of injured and insulted humanity, I could not be satisfied with myself without expressing [illegible] my humble way, my grateful [illegible]

Very respectfully,

one's own social betters. But also, ironically, to become more steadily, mentally and physically vigorous through the perpetuation of the unbridled and lecherous, terrible balance. Such is the recipe for ruination in My Presbyterian soul informs me that [illegible] truly exist. But what is ever lost in such a society, such as ancient Jerusalem or Egypt, to weep for a man trapped in such circumstance and to hope that events may one day instruct him to deem to see by his own soul's light.



IN RECENT YEARS THE AGITATIONS of Mr. Walker and the abolitionists at Franklin have stirred up great moral debate. Just this past February, the Ohio Legislature passed a new constitution, one that in its sentiments touches my own condition. Now, while I cannot vote or testify in court against a white man, I can be counted in the appropriation of representatives. Besides, I am a citizen of New A-thens. I am a fortunate graduate of Franklin College. I am a confidant of President John Walker, and also of Mr. John A. Bingham, now a lawyer. He is quietly making plans to run for a seat in Congress as a Whig, but I do fear that the recent "loco foco" abolitionisms will soon cause him to side with one of the factions now appearing. The constant movements of the National Road suggest to me the generation of a new thrust forward, one that may impose a more natural order. Here I must impose censure on my leaning toward imposing the face of Alexander of Macedon on to Mr. Bingham's own face. He struggles daily, as we all do struggle. But when I consider the plight of those unfortunate souls moving up and down the road, I thank God that I am a somewhat free colored man, and a Presbyterian colored man, too, living amongst the stern-souled Scotch-Irish. I am not ashamed to admit that they are my protectors. Would that the miserable wretches cowering along that road in chains had some similar sources of protection.

My good friend and classmate at Franklin, John A. Bingham, has some sound ideas along this line. Just now he serves as a prosecuting attorney of Tuscarawas County, but he has much larger ambitions. His mentor is Reverend John Walker, president of Franklin, and it was, I am sure, at the promptings of Reverend Walker that, two years ago, at the Whig national convention, he proposed a resolution that, again I am sure, might have come from the mouth of Reverend Walker himself: "No more slave states; no more slave territories; the maintenance of freedom where freedom is; and the protection of American industry." Sadly, this resolution failed of acceptance in the Whig convention of 1848. Now Mr. Bingham is attempting to find a more practical way of putting forth his views, even if he must join forces with the new party that is said to be forming.

I PRAY FOR HIS SUCCESS, EVEN AS I watch the stream of the suffering and the hopeful moving along the National Road . . .

THE TAIPING LEADERS

BY HA JIN

IN OUR GODLESS LAND EVERY HERO [illegible] Wind Hill [illegible] the Central Committee [illegible] became [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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Manchu officials and their

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mat. What's more, we are well disciplined: nobody is allowed to take anything away from the civilians, looting is prohibited, all spoils belong to the public treasury, officers and soldiers are equal, as we are all brothers and sisters; men and women are kept in separate camps, sex is forbidden, even among married couples, because we are instructed that the genuine union of men and women can happen only after our final victory—the establishment of our earthly paradise. Offenders against the laws will be executed publicly. Sometimes when we arrive at a town, its citizens will gather along the roadside to welcome us.

One day, one of Hong's closest friends, Yang, who used to be a charcoal burner in our home province, suddenly falls into a trance. He's an emaciated, yellow-faced man, who used to be fond of opium, gambling, and prostitutes but gave up his bad habits all at once after he met Hong. Many of us witness his sudden transformation into the Holy Spirit. It's a windy afternoon. The sun, blurred and low, seems to have grown toothed petals like a gigantic flower. Yang collapses on the drill ground in front of four hundred men, ranting and kicking his thin legs. "I'm the Holy Ghost, I'm your Father," he raves. "All, all of you must follow my words from now on. I am the king of kings. Listen and obey . . ."

Thunderstruck, we don't know what to do. We just watch him lying on his back and shouting with his eyes closed and with foam at his mouth.

An orderly is sent to inform Hong of what's going on. Within ten minutes Hong arrives on his black steed. "Get up, Brother Yang," he pleads. "Don't make a fool of yourself like this."

We all hold our breath, fearful that he's going to have Yang flogged.

To our surprise, the glassy-eyed Yang orders Hong solemnly, "Kneel down, my son. You slapped your seventh concubine again last night, didn't you? So you sinned against me, your Father. For months you have spoiled your baby son. You have let him tear cloth just because he likes the sound of it. You have let him feed his monkeys rice and stewed pigeon while there are still beggars on the streets. Now I must teach you a lesson so you will remember that I sent you down not to enjoy happiness but to suffer for all living creatures. Get ready to accept your punishment."

"Shut up!" a young officer barks at him.

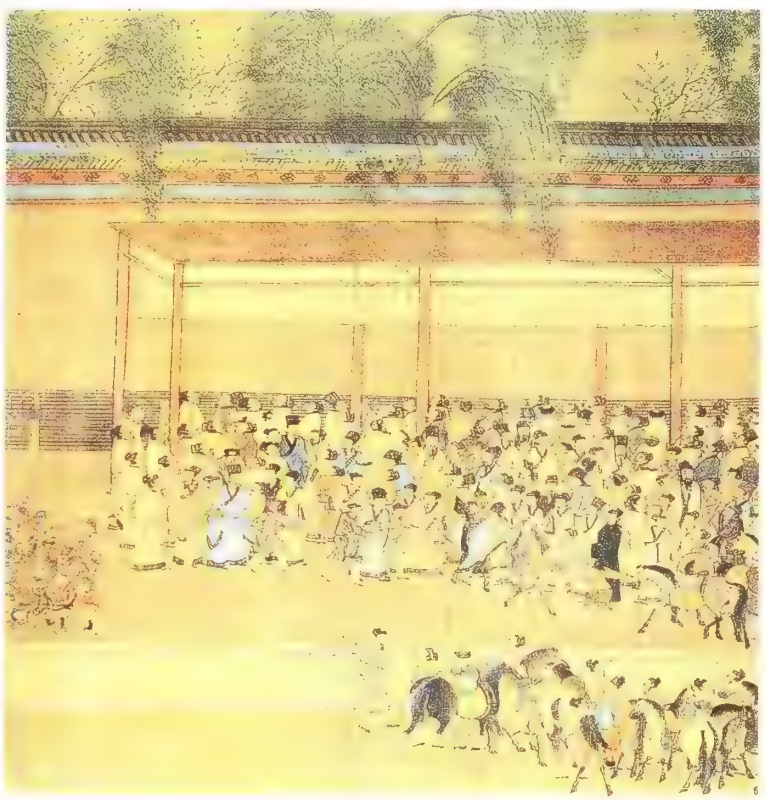
But somehow Hong is visibly shaken by Yang's voice. He looks pallid and dazed. Sweat breaks out across his brow. To our astonishment, he lifts the front end of his robe, falls on his knees, and bows his head.

"Do what he says," he tells us.

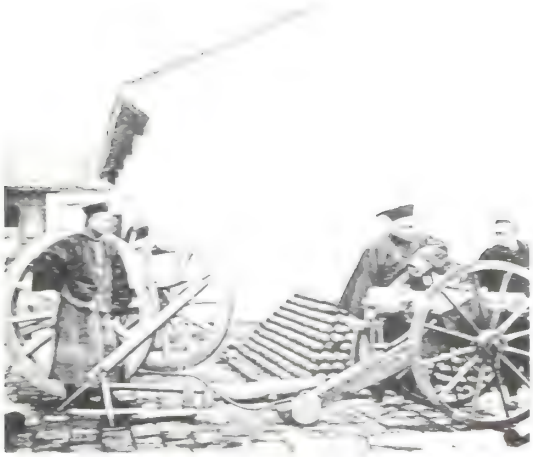
"Give him one hundred lashes!" screams the Father.

Two strapping fellows step forward and each with a bull's pizzle begin thrashing Hong, who wriggles but doesn't utter a sound. Throughout the punishment he remains on his knees and grits his teeth to suppress his moaning. He's a tough man but is so affected that he can't force himself to his feet when the flogging is over. His bodyguards help him up and lift Yang on his horse. Blood drips from his fingertips.

For a whole week Hong can't walk. Afterward he appoints Yang the East King, second only to himself in power. Fortunately, Yang doesn't speak as our Holy Father very often. God visits him only a few times a year.



Meanwhile, we've never stopped fighting the Manchu troops. From time to time we have to abandon a town or a city to avoid annihilation. Hong has another bosom friend, General Hsiao, who used to be a peasant and occasionally hired himself out as a porter. Like Yang, Hsiao manages to get admitted to the divine household, and he, too, begins to have trances. He's a giant, tall and thickset, but he's smart and nimble, skilled in martial arts. We all respect him, because he always charges into battle at the front of his troops and often shares with them his meat and wine, and also because he hates foreign devils, once he single-handedly felled a band of them. He's straightforward and speaks in a voice like a bell. Unlike Yang's godly transformation, Hsiao's is more peaceful; he merely calls Hong "my younger brother" and himself Jesus Christ.



OVERHEARD ON THE NIGHT OF MARCH 21, 1850

BY JOANNA SCOTT

A MISTY MARCH NIGHT IN SALEM

Sophie and the children in Boston and travel on his own. He will leave as soon as possible. He would have left today if his wife and children weren't ill. Here he is, author of the *The Scarlet Letter* which, though penned in the time it takes to break a colt, has met with immediate acclaim. Nathaniel Hawthorne is a success. But he's also the Custom House surveyor recently turned out of office by the citizens of Salem. They feel an infinite contempt for him; he feels an infinite contempt for them. What else is there to say?

"I'd say the wretched Dimmesdale is truly one of the most finely wrought characters I've ever encountered."

"I'd insist that old Roger Chillingworth makes a more lasting impression."

Hawthorne's friend the lawyer George Hillard is talking to a colleague at a Court Street tavern in Boston. Had Hawthorne been there, modesty would have compelled him to withdraw from the conversation, and he'd have turned his chair away and done what he most likes to do when he's at this tavern: watch the bustle of life around him.

A shopkeeper from Hanover Street orders a gin cocktail. A sailor noisily slurps a Tom and Jerry. Someone whistles at the barmaid, someone coughs, and half a dozen men gathered around a table erupt in laughter as one man flattens the creases of a piece of paper. On the paper is a drawing of a girl, and the men are laughing at the disproportions—coconut breasts, splayed thighs shaped like the pastry tubes bakers use to squeeze out cream roses, fish pucker for lips. The men are happy because they've drunk three rounds of brandy smashes. They are happy because they've worked hard all day and believe themselves to be deserving. They've never heard of Nathaniel Hawthorne and have no reason to converse with the lawyers across the room. They are too busy enjoying themselves. Life is short, the night is long . . . but not so long that they don't have to get home before their wives can complain.

The men leave the tavern, five of them turning left down Court Street, the artist of the sketch turning right. He walks with his coat slung over his shoulders. As he continues up the empty street he slides his arms into the coat. His drawing, folded into quarters, drops from his pocket and is snatched by the wind.

At first the paper looks as if it's fleeing from a predator. Then it spins upward, gliding lazily on the air current. Finally it falls into a puddle and stays there, as stiff and buoyant as the pad of a water lily. In the silence of the empty street a faint humming is audible—a sound produced, perhaps, by the movement of air across the surface of the puddle, or by the gentle slosh of water against the paving stones.

If the deacon had been there to hear the sound, he would have looked around and told himself he were mistaken. He'd have heard a passing cart, or the wind in the eaves, and gone back to his paper, preoccupied with the parables, and ignorant of the discovery that, in another decade, he would have been condemned for his belief that America suffered from moral pollution. Puritans, he'd have told the founder would never have believed this—all this shrill, the falling away from piety—and that America should be a better place. Would be a better place, at the deacon's last appointment. The Christian faith is a transforming force, the only power through which the spirit of life can ever live, but the truth of this has been overwritten. The deacon, writing for the *Christian Register*, has devoted himself to reminding his readers of God's pardoning mercy amidst the wreck of earthly hopes.

FEMINISM'S FIRST MINUTES

From the proceedings of the first Woman's Rights Convention, held at Worcester, Massachusetts, October 23–24, 1850

Oct. 24.—The Convention met at half past nine, A.M.

The minutes of yesterday's afternoon and evening sessions were read by J. C. Hathaway, and adopted.

Letters addressed to the Convention were read from Elizabeth C. Stanton and O. S. Fowler, by M. A. W. Johnson; and one from Samuel J. May, by Mr. Hathaway.

W. H. Channing, from the Business Committee, reported a series of resolutions.[. . .]

Resolved, That a Central Committee be appointed by this Convention, empowered to enlarge their numbers; on (1) Education; (2) Industrial Avocations; (3) Civil and Political Rights and Regulations; (4) Social Relations; who shall correspond with each other and with the Central Committee, hold meetings in their respective neighborhoods, gather statistics, facts, and illustrations, raise funds for purposes of publication, and through the press, tracts, books, and the living agent, guide public opinion upward and onward in the grand social reform of establishing woman's co-sovereignty with man.[. . .]

Resolved, That every effort to educate woman without according to her her rights, and arouse her conscience by the weight of her responsibilities, is futile, and a waste of labor.

Resolved, That the cause we are met to advocate,—the claim for woman of all her natural and civil rights—bids us remember the million and a half of slave women at the South, the most grossly wronged and foully outraged of all women, and in every effort for the improvement of our civilization, we will bear in our heart of hearts the memory of the trampled women of the plantation, without neglecting to [illegible] a share in the [illegible] claim for ourselves.



Beloved by strangers, despised by his neighbors, how could this have happened? He's told no lies. It's a cool night, though there won't be much of a moon tonight, and it's moonlight that gives substance to transparent fancy. Without the moon's illumination, he would never find words for all the stories he'd like to tell. He still has plenty of stories and more time than ever to tell them, thanks to the citizens of Salem.

Oh, he has better thoughts to think than these. He'll think of his wife. He imagines her waking in the morning, frail but finally rid of the fever. He'll think of his son: little Julian announcing that supper is not dinner and a chair is not a teapot.

He imagines he's in the Old Corner Bookstore watching an elegant, elderly woman purchase his book.

He thinks of his friend and publisher, Fields, the sea captain, and how Fields confessed that he always gets violently ill on sea voyages.

He imagines the elderly woman alone in her parlor, a cozy fire burning, his book open on her hands.

He thinks of his little daughter, Una, presenting upon him the gift of a freshly plucked dandelion.

He is soothed by his wife's steady breathing. She's still clammy with fever, but she will be better soon, he's confident. He would like to wake her and talk to her. He would like to take her in his arms, but she must be allowed her mending sleep.

She believes her husband to be a writer of rare skill and vision. He believes his art to be, at least in part, a wager. He has been lucky so far. He is only mildly proud. Mostly, he is relieved by the favorable notices his book has received. But he's more ashamed of censure.

Will his art survive him? Will posterity record the charges against him made by the Whigs? Will he be remembered as just another incompetent Custom House surveyor?

This morning when he was out walking he'd heard the call of what he guessed to be a woodcock. Searching the trees, trying to find the bird [illegible] and he'd felt all other sentiments give way to curiosity. For a lovely moment, the judgments of others did not matter. The world was too mysterious a place for him to care about public opinion.

He is calmed by the memory of this moment. He plumps up his feather mattress and wonders what he will dream tonight.

Hawthorne sleeps, and the door to the Court Street tavern closes with a grinding thud. The lawyer Hillard and his colleague part company and



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with its opposite directions. The wind creeps through the streets, ripples the surface of the puddles, lifts a corner up of the drawing. But still a tuneless humming can be heard, the melody like the whir when a tuning fork is struck. Inside the folded paper the ink drawing has smeared, and the girl, whoever she was, whatever she did to earn the attention of an amateur caricaturist, is now a formless, misty nothing.

Which is just what Mr. Hawthorne's book offers as solace for the fallen: nothing! The deacon will assure his readers of the opposite. God's love is everything—constant, merciful, redemptive—and through it the sinner may know inward peace. But Mr. Hawthorne is ignorant of religion. He has no real compassion for sinners.

That this narrative should be popular is understandable. It is vigorous in its conception, the deacon will admit, and has a condensed energy of language and emotion. But that it should survive to become in the annals of literature one of the significant works of the time is a horrifying notion. Although the deacon cannot keep his contemporaries from reading *The Scarlet Letter*, he can explain why the story does not deserve a future.

His pen hovers above the page. He will begin with a comment about Hawthorne's introduction—a half-serious, half-humorous account of the Salem Custom House and its inmates. The deacon will say something about the airy grace of this preface.

A gurgle in the empty cavity of his stomach causes an abdominal muscle to quiver. He shifts in his straight-backed wooden chair as a bubble of air travels upward toward his throat, forcing ahead of it a droplet of acid. His esophagus widens with the pressure. The uvula tenses. A salivary gland grows moist. He bends his neck to accommodate the passage of air. He flattens the apex of his tongue. He opens his mouth and politely covers his lips with his fist, though there is no one near to overhear him.

The deacon belches.

Hawthorne snores.

In a puddle on Court Street, a nameless, formless girl hums softly to herself.

SMALL BLUE THING

BY MADISON SMARTT BELL

FIRST OF ALL, I AM NOT A RAVEN. A *stately raven*, with a four-foot wing spread and a beak like a samurai sword, probably wouldn't have fit in the room. What I am is a crow, an American common crow, *Corvus brachyrhynchos*, harsh call and a ragged shadow on the lawn.

"Poetic license" is what they call it. When they get it wrong.

House not big enough to swing a cat in. I suppose you might have walled up a cat in there somewhere. One of his fancies: walled-up cats. *I told him, nevermore, poe-etic-al*, he said at the end, and [illegible] *the best thing, when it [illegible] Poe in Paris, out with a pistol.* He also kept asking for someone named Reynolds, who [illegible] because the only person he knew named Reynolds was not going to be any help to him then or there, not that anyone else [illegible].

When I [illegible] them, that first time? In that house, that place? Far below the spiral of warm air on which I soared, there was a glint, a sparkle: sunlight riding a crack in a window pane. (He had [illegible] glass—it wasn't [illegible].)

We are not [illegible] the way. Scrunking, bald-headed, wrinkle-necked, puking vultures. On the other hand, we do take notice of distress. We do.

Nevermore, I NEVER SAID IT. THE FIRST word out of my beak was a simple *hello*, just to create a distraction while I sidled nearer to that round shiny thing on the mantel, that cloudy pearl with its curved reflection. My simple O sound didn't do it for the poet, though. It had to be ore, preferably with a few other syllables draped over the front. This was the man, remember, who declared in one of his lengthy disquisitions that the most beautiful phrase in English was *cellar door*.

He came at me, flapping first the same quill pen he'd been writing with, then a moldy old feather duster he'd dragged up from somewhere behind his table. I was only an animal to him. No doubt he thought I was going to crap on his parchment, and him with the ink stains all over his fingers, and on the cuff of his shirt, where he had unconsciously dragged it through the blots and cross-outs. The cat, meanwhile, was scrunched up in a corner with its eyes bugged out and its fur all sticking up on end.

The poet is flailing the duster around, obscur-

ng my objective. *I'm going to open*, he's think-
ng, *why not get the crow first out?* But it was hard to
ly in so small a space without knocking everything
ver, so I adopted a pose on top of a lamp and tried
o change the subject.

Feed me meat, I said. Then, in case he wasn't lis-
ening, I said it again. *Feed me meat.*

The poet had lowered his feather duster. He
stood there huffing and sweating from that little
mount of exertion. Eyes bugging out at
ne as big as the cat's. *Feed me meat.*

I put my head on one side, then the
other. Dark hollows painted around his
eyes. The mouth rather small, reddish,
oursed, some might have called it weak.
His hair too long and disheveled, pasted
his way and that over spiraling baldness
w the cold unhealthy sweat. The little
landy's mustache had been left un-
groomed. But there was a trace of the
landy about him still — gone seedy, per-
haps, like the mustache and shirt. His
skin was delicate, pale, translucent. Every-
hing got through to him. Next to noth-
ng between his blood and the open air.

SUDDENLY, WHAT DO YOU know but he went and got me some meat. This was a sympathetic individual once you got his attention. I sort of saw the idea form in his mind, so I went hopping after him when he left the room. The cat was still skirking around the baseboards, not getting any too near. I clacked at it, hopping over the threshold.

In the kitchen my man was uncovering the slop pail and what do we have here? Item with a fine high odor, lustrous with slime. A slice of beef, which through the operation of time and neglect had evolved into a choice piece of carrion. Not that they could afford that sort of waste. But the lady of the house, through no fault of her own, had been letting the housekeeping slide.

I perch! I had flown a long way, I realized all of a sudden. The cat was winding its way through the table legs, pink nose wrinkled in feigned disgust.

I kept the meat pinned down with a claw and tore strips from it with my beak. There was noise at the kitchen door, but I was concentrating so I hardly noticed. Then a bustle, a gasp, whirl of shawl, sick-room smell, cough, crumple. *Darling-you mustn't exert yourself*, etc. He seemed to be guiding her out of the room. Leaving me alone with my meal, the cat watching with its witch-green eyes. When I was full was when the meat was gone. It occurred to me that maybe now there was nothing between myself and the shiny thing on the mantel.

JUST TO BE CLEAR, THERE WASN'T any *pulse-burst of Poker*. There wasn't any burst at all. What he had on the mantel was a crystal ball, like for cowards or fortune tellers. I don't know how he'd got it — some exposition. It sat above the fireplace and sucked up every flame it could. All the room and its furnishings warped away in its reflection, even the window where he let me in.

It had been a cloud I flown. Ex- lamp, windy,



and warm. Darkness of the window prime when I landed on the sill. When the cloud passed from the sun the crack on the glass began to glitter once again. I saw the crow floating in the glass, glossy-winged, strong black devil. Sure, I pecked a time or two. There's your *tap-tap-tapping*. But we don't actually think there's another crow behind the mirror. When you fight your reflection, you know it's yourself you're fighting . . . that's the point.

I don't really know why he opened the window. Maybe he thought I was going to break the glass. He had scrunched his writing table up against the inside sill to get the best of the daylight he could. It was a crooked little house, and poorly angled for natural light, but they had to scrimp on candles and lamp oil.

And besides, as I said, he was curious.

He used to play with logic like a rubber band. Then there was the story that affixed the logic to the horror. A man is looking out a window and sees a gruesome arachnid monster laying waste to the surroundings. Turns out it's only a spider

about the size of a dandruff flake suspended from an invisible thread a half-inch from his eye.

All a matter of perspective, don't you see?

THERE WAS THE CROW IN THE crystal ball. I never considered pecking the ball. It was too beautiful. If only it had been the size of a cantaloupe, I could have carried it off and hidden it somewhere. If I gaped toward it, my craw slid over the surface, stretching wide enough to swallow it altogether. But that was illusion. I hopped backward, turned my head from one side to the other. Right eye, left, each eye expanding on the globe to cover it completely. I took another hop, sideways on the mantel. The whole room swam inside the crystal. There sat, composed below the fireplace with its four white booties neatly together, looked up at me, the picture of innocence. The poet, struggling with the poker, trying to coax a little warmth from the miserable tiny coal grate. In the background was that one, the little girl, expiring on a divan. I saw her raise herself against the cushion, the movement swimming in the crystal. With her fingers she curbed the edges of her mouth. I turned from her reflection to face her.

You thought of her as a little girl even though she was twenty-four by that time and a married woman. But she'd been seven when they met, thirteen when they married. Little Virginia Clemm—not the euphonious sort of name he liked. Call her Ligeia, or Annabel Lee. *Lenore*. Something soft and whispering.

Consumption, that was her situation. She still went creeping around that house at times. She'd leave her couch and wander, as she had done this day. But she was already a ghost by then. Her round little face gone all cadaverous, turned discreetly aside to catch the proceeds of a wet cough in her lace-edged, blood-clotted handkerchief. There's your *lost Lenore* if you like.

There was fear in her face as she looked up at me. Recoil. Harbinger of death, she was thinking. Her husband's mad fantasies leaking through. *Grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore*, and on and on. She had reason to be frightened, poor small thing, though not of me. I was racking my brains for something reassuring to say to her. Something decent, at least. *Feed me meat* seemed a bit risqué. Unfortunately, most of my phrases came from sailors and whores.

Hell's bells was the mildest thing I could think of. Or *Ring my bells!* but in a way that was worse.

Bells, I said. *Bells bells bells bells bells bells bells.*

When she took her fingers down there was a smile. Dab of blood at the corner but a smile. The crow is talking. *Bells*, it says. The poet straightened from the coal grate, the poker balanced in his fingers light as air. You could see in his face he didn't quite trust it. He was going to get this moment. Smile and never mind the bloody fingertips. A small orb of warmth swelled into the room. Just for this moment everything would be all right.

IT'S A LIE ABOUT HOW I LOOMED over him for all eternity, his *soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor/Shall be lifted—nevermore!* We have migration to consider, after all. But whenever I lit on the sill they'd let me in, and sometimes they would feed me. A place where they let you in and feed you meat—now that's worth something.

I swear she lit up to see me return . . . I suppose it proved that something kept happening. Another day come and she wasn't dead yet.

It took her over a year to die, and she had little rallies. Evenings she'd come down and play the little spinet backed into the wall, opposite his table. Him and her mother and me and the cat sitting up politely as if we were in church, attending her frail melodies. They never lasted long.

He used to sing to her sometimes. He would il-

NEOLOGISMS

A selection of words first appearing in 1850. From the Oxford English Dictionary, *2nd Edition*

aircraft
[illegible]
Anglo-Saxondom
Armagnac
[illegible]
Backwardation
beaverish
[illegible]
[illegible]
buddy
Bund
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courtwards
dandydom
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derailment
dhyana
diamagnetism
[illegible]
Dogger
embarcadero
employee

Eng. Lit.
expressionist
fairy story
flummadiddle
free soil
glacierist
heart beat
hewgag
homesteading
humiliator
Indonesian
infanticidal
interoceanic
[illegible]
lampshade
malodorous
Mazzinian
morbidize
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nationhood
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Ohm's law
[illegible]
owldom

pampas-grass
Panslavistic
petty bourgeoisie
plutocrat
pornographer
Pre-Raphael
prettify
proletairism
propylene
pylon
red-tapish
sawbuck
[illegible]
serfdom
show business
sheenicks
[illegible]
sonny
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
takin
[illegible]
wavelength
White Russian
withdrawable



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sorts of [illegible] poems and stories, though not the most [illegible] sometimes, but that was when she was lucid and strong enough to sit up. When she was sick and lost her head he would hold her and read [illegible] like … *When you read these, you'll find that all the pretty little horses.* God love him, his singing voice was worse than mine. The cat was delirious, it was nothing to her, but the cat would slink off into the alley, while old Lady Clemm lurked in the kitchen, fingers practically stuck in her ears. Not so much against the racket perhaps as … well, it was distressing. They were in a bad way.

What's the other verse to that one? Can't remember the first line but it involves exalt and

[illegible]
[illegible]
Beauty is sorrow's shadow.

Quite a choice for your invalid moribund spouse, or for anyone else if you think about it. He must have picked up that one down in Virginia. This was Sherry time, don't forget. Some of the songs Mammy sang were kind of grim.

FUNNY BUT HE'D SEEM TO KNOW WHEN I was leaving. He'd look at me with a sort of envy then. If only he could just sling on a pair of wings and fly away from that death trap till it shrank away to a little tight ball, a marble, a dot, then nothing. With all the crazy things he wrote I think that was the worst he ever thought.

He would have liked to have gone stark raving [illegible] but I don't think there was much of his sister [illegible] That would have been another way out. But in reality he stayed pretty sane. Even the drinking and drugging was greatly exaggerated later on. Mostly it was medicinal use. After she was dead and buried and he was sick himself in [illegible] he needed a lot of medicine.

One spring day I came back and the room was empty. In the crystal flowed the warped overwing figure and beyond: the vacant writing desk, the spinet with its empty bench, and above them the [illegible] type portrait hanging on the wall.

Bells I TOLD HER. SOMETIMES WHEN the bells are ringing, I soar so high I can hardly stand it. Till the orb of the world shrinks away from me to the size of a blue-green marble. A dot, then nothing. And still I feel its bright eye watching me, in the night of the universe so black I couldn't pick out the shape of my own wing against it. Nothing but darkness, and the darkness is me.

I still fly over the place sometimes. It's the projects now, West Baltimore slums. All crack dealers and whores in tights. Everything right out there on the street. They lost something when they let go the whalebone and lace. Long fancy opium pipes and hookahs like he smoked sometimes. Something, certainly, has been lost.

P. T. BARNUM *and My Great-Great-Granddad's* SLAVES

BY ALLAN GURGANUS

WALT WHITMAN, THE TWENTY-SIX [illegible] *Brooklyn Eagle* interviewed the great showman in March 1846. "We saw Mr Barnum, of Tom Thumb notoriety, manager of the [illegible] He told us about his tour through all the capitals of Europe and his interviews with the Emperors and Kings. We asked Barnum what he saw there which made him [illegible] He rolled his eyes [illegible] Why, sir, you can't imagine the difference—There everything is frozen—kings and things—[illegible] Here [illegible] Here everything is in motion."

"[illegible] speech of Barnum's."

IN MY DREAM OF 1850, I STILL OWN the farm. I am the very buck that Mr Barnum's traveling show is headed south to fleece. (The buck in question, my actual great-great-granddad, born 1812.)

Like him, I dream I have a little extra pocket change and these nine hundred acres, the twelve horses stabled yonder and those four great barns out back, all ours, mine. I count myself a Man of Science, and my fourteen-volume diary will prove mostly Daily Weather in stolid prose and a handwriting as forward-tiltingly unsinkable as some four-masted schooner. And yet there is an appetite for Strangers and the Strangeness they can bring. I admit to my own birthright luck. Our bottomland is fertile;

here and thus ideal for cotton. At church, I [illegible] and am respected. And yet, blessed though I be by Our Creator, despite the superb health and conformation of my children—I do experience a hidden Presbyterian yearning after [illegible] what? Yes, Novelty. This minor cultural [illegible] ways makes me prey to just such touring salesmen, preachers, show folk.

THE ROADSHOW BARNUM TOURING company stirred in my great-great-granddad both excitement and philanthropy. Here is how I know. This, from a letter dated 1850, was addressed to his brother Juliam, then attending a Boys' Academy in Raleigh:

> As the Exposition of Animals and Curiosities will be presented at New Bern next week's end, I hope to take this town's whole population. And I mean all hues of it. We shall view such instructive curiosities as Mr. Barnum's traveling troupe chooses to affright us with. Given the abundance of our recent cotton harvest, as I told you, a most capital crop, the exhibition arrives at a medium-testing point. This amusement will prove a meet reward to my dear household entire. And I cannot but admit to even looking somewhat forward to myself.

I KNOW CERTAIN OF MY GREAT-great-grandfather's facts because, in 1850, the census-takers began listing names, not just a household's numbers for its kids and acreage. I have that ledger here (it smells of sneeze-making green bread-mold of good brown inhaling cigars). It lists the telling names of this prominent young farmer's children, the names and maiden names of his wife and her resident young sister, and of their slaves. But, when I dream of 1850, my vision of it, somewhat inherited, is a dream curbistically reordered by distance, by my having read a certain amount of economic and social history, and by my own modern liberal biases and bigotries. I know that Great-Great-Grandpap's zeal in holding on to slaves helped lead him into death at age fifty. And yet, within this dream of mine, I receive them all at the front door. I receive into my contemporary homeplace those departed family members listed under one gent's time-overarching name. His dependents—my great-great-grandmother and her lovely live-in younger sister. And at the same front door, I greet those slaves titled for life by their owner, my own genetic cofounder. My forebear, a man intelligent, prideful, racist, and loving.

(He was thirty-five when Mr. Barnum's second-string exhibit arrived in New Bern, N.C., summer of 1850; and he would die at age fifty, wearing a Colonel's uniform at the battle of Shiloh, fighting for . . . fighting for . . . the right to take his people to the circus and, of course, for the right to [illegible] such people ever and always "this" people. Then his son's, then *his* son's, and then . . .)

II

P. T. BARNUM HIMSELF OWNED slaves. He later admitted how, during a southern tour in the late 1830s, he bought a woman and child, perhaps just to see how all that felt. (I had to know everything, that man with his gargantuan appetites, "Jumbo" ones, to use just one of his invented words.) The showman also kept a male slave as his personal groom-valet. But, believing the man had stolen from him, Barnum "gave him fifty lashes, and took him to New Orleans where he was sold at auction." When public opinion subsequently turned against such treatment, Barnum conceded, "I ought to have been whipped a thousand times for this myself."

And yet the showman's particular genius ran to keeping so remedially in touch with the very limitations and superstitions of his white audience that Phineas Taylor Barnum always guessed how best to allure, then anticipate, and finally outfox, thoroughly hoax them. And in the end they loved him for it.

He leased from her owner a slave named Joice Heth. She was blind, wizened, and, because she couldn't see to cut them, her fingernails in-bent were six to eight inches long. Staging one of his most famous pranks, Barnum passed her off as the mammy to George Washington (in turn, the

A NORTHERNER'S REPLY

Letter from an abolitionist in Cincinnati, Ohio, to his sister in Louisville, Kentucky

June 12, 1850

My sister,

My son, James, has shown me your note to him expressing a desire to visit me. I now answer it.

It has been my practice for many years to have no intercourse with oppressors of their fellow-beings, except so far as *business* might require. That you are one I entertain no doubt, and that you are becoming an old one certainly makes the case no better. A disease of whatever nature—moral or otherwise—in my own family, among my natural friends, is surely not less to be deprecated than when it is a long way off and confined to others.

Under these circumstances, it would be unnecessary for you to come to Cincinnati, on my account.

Your [illegible]
and [illegible]
[illegible]

Father of His Country). Here I will simply quote from the old handbill itself. Perhaps I cannot improve upon Barnum's epic understatement, especially on behalf of this subcontracted slavewoman (whose autopsy would prove her actual age to have been "no more than eighty").

> *The Greatest Natural Curiosity in the World! Now Exhibiting at Barnum's Museum, Broadway. Within a few days of the 161st Anniversary of the birth of the Illustrious Father of His Country, GEORGE WASHINGTON. Now in the 161st year of her age! JOICE HETH, a Native of Africa, was purchased by the father of the present proprietor of Barnum's Museum, in the year 1760, when she was in the full vigor of womanhood. She has consequently now arrived at the astonishing age of 161 years!*

The owner of this poor woman—advertised as twice her natural age—averred she was worth at least three thousand. But Barnum, driver of tough bargains, paid just one thousand for the uses of Ms Heth forthwith and till her death. And since only the autopsy discredited her supposed antiquity, the showman made a fortune from her constant exhausting city-to-city display. Barnum continued to argue on behalf of slavery, "[I]f the blacks were . . . set free and there was no army to protect the whites, the blacks would murder them and take possession of their property."

As a young man, Barnum himself had performed in blackface; he did much to advance the popularity of the 1840's minstrel craze. White men smudged their faces with burnt cork. They painted on broadened white lips and wore stiff fright wigs meant to suggest certain comically conceived grotesque black "types" with names like "Jimmy Crack Corn." Some minstrel performers often played that African-inspired instrument, the banjo. Their material was largely cribbed from actual black performers, then presented for the amusement of working-class white audiences. Certain gifted black performers could only find work by smearing "blackface" on themselves! So, these very Black Men made their living cleverly White Men, mimicking the foolishness of Black Men; and all before one note was sung!

President Tyler himself delighted in offering a [illegible] at the White House.

III

BUT ALL THIS IS MUCH GRANDER and more elaborate than their small travelling troupe could manage. Barnum's latest [illegible] in New York City. It is a patched-together entertainment but one still bearing Barnum's lucrative seal of approval. And so, dressed in a black frock coat (1850, was there any other kind?), with a gold watch chain (now in the author's possession) looped to the magisterial hour-chiming watch (lost at Shiloh twelve years later but today still snug in his right vest pocket), my ancestor finally clucks two roan horses down the graded ride from his hilltop house. In his buggy, the two elder children, his wife, his live-in sister-in-law, all animated about seeing the exhibition (a word he prefers to "circus"). In one mule-drawn wooden wagon bringing up behind them, the seven slaves. One old white hired man is left back home to tend the property and feed the cows and swine. All others, hooray, are bound to see the Curiosities, all invited. The very fact that Grandpa took his slaves four miles' distance to see a mere amusement of no pertinence to their cotton cultivation skill marks him as a man remarkable to his epoch: unconventional, experimental, maybe even Scientific in his outlook.

BUT, TO BE HONEST: EVERY GRANDchild of slave-owners will, even in this new century, offer you a silver tray spread with lavish instances of his family's kindness to "their" people. Back before freedom so devalued these adored investment-ornaments. My own great-great allowed his wife's teaching several house slaves to read. For this license, he endured the censure of other owners out his way. "Train them in that, what's next? They'll soon murder you in your beds." "While reading Horace's Odes aloud," he is said to have replied. But I am whitewashing him, am I not? The man was not so gently radical that he, like General Washington, freed his slaves upon his death. No, "his" had to be forcibly removed from him by the very History that so forcibly awarded his left temple a lethal minnie ball. But not yet . . .

AS PLANNED, YOU HEAR THE CIRCUS long before you see it. With its gallery sideshows leading toward the Big Top, the ragtag of pretty spectacle lays strewn across a former peanut field. It is owned, according to the papers of the day, by one Dewit Barnum, "no relation whatever," the record states.

Today, local stables have been denuded of rental horses, such steeds pressed into service by clever boys who've formed an instant jitney service to transport (25 cents, even for children) curiosity-seekers arrived by train, along that dusty last half-mile to a quite-loud exposition. You can enjoy the calliope (named, of course, for the muse of epic poetry) from a mile or more off, which is

why they use that hutty putty hundy gundy instrument, and because where else do you ever hear one?

There's a new sort of person busying the board sidewalks of New Bern today—sleek, commercial, haughty, not come here to see *us*. Owner of the General Store reported record sales that whole day long, and on account, he'd opened just past dawn, knowing. My grandfather and his wife, Sarah, and her sister, the beautiful Lavinia, arrive with the two older children in one buggy. Following, in the second large conveyance, utilized mostly for hauling produce, the slaves, one a wet nurse seen suckling the owner's youngest child. The infant's mother cannot risk any stray milky leakage on a dress so silk and shipped clear from Richmond. Upon entering the wagon-clatter and music, on seeing such dust clouds containing total strangers, my kinsmen sit straighter on their leather seat; they're fighting to look calm and accustomed, their emotions' owners.

But the slaves themselves do not strain for that false and brittle poise; they seem unapologetically interested, and yet, holding one another's hands, they do act half-afraid. They wear their light-brown linsey-woolseys, a home-woven combination of linen and wool. They are groomed and they rest so close shoulder-to-shoulder, as if fearful of what they might be forced to see—here at a show where people are exhibits. The sexualized carney atmosphere, the barkers directing rustic crowds to note this displayed one's features and pointing out that; it must feel for slaves distinctly auction-like.

Since my great-great-grandfather, at least according to family legend, illegally permitted the teaching of literacy, some of his slaves could've read aloud to the others those elaborately painted canvas pennants hung before midway tents hiding their curiosities: *Zonar, the Bearded Dog-Faced Lady of Spain, Bobo, the Whale Boy Weighing No Less than 547 pounds at His Last Feeding.*

Mr. Barnum believed in racial equality at least at the Admission Booth. Any person, whatever their color, if possessing correctly colored coin of the realm, was allowed into the main circus tent and, leading there, into all the special exhibitions (separate admissions, please).

I can quite tenderly picture my great-great-grandfather (cursed with my same rosy English coloring, so unsuitable for the South's tropical glare and so morbidly apt to be damaged by sun). He was, I know from a painting and one tintype, a fellow cursed with my same pattern baldness, alas (or was I with *his*?). I can easily imagine him leading his handsome wife and prettier sister-in-law—(his mistress, according to family rumor), he has already paid admission for the entire tribe

"of all hues" as he'd jimsch[illegible] at [illegible] coldly wrote. He now hoists his namesake eldest son, a boy still too short to see over the many cramming adult heads and the ladies' hats ridiculously huge this year. My great-great-granddad has convinced himself [illegible]



what this exhibit's poster promises: "Truthful," "Moral," "Instructive." And by his own [illegible] he not? His heart quickens: I that [illegible] "Undaunted," perhaps even "amused [illegible] ened" by access to such models [illegible] sons will pay [illegible]

MADEMOISELLE JENNY LIND VISITS THE *HERALD*

From [illegible], *the September 4, 1850,* New York Herald

Yesterday afternoon Mademoiselle Jenny Lind, accompanied by her private Secretary and Signor Benedict and Signor Belletti, with Mr. Jay and Mr. Barnum, visited the *Herald* office, for the purpose of seeing the machinery. The presses were just at work when she arrived, and Mr. Bennett, in the meantime, showed her the editorial rooms, and his own private sanctum. While waiting for the carriage to be placed in the position, he conversed about the present beautiful weather, and spoke in glowing terms of the fine, pure, healthy bracing air of our climate. In reply to her inquiries about the equinoctial gales, Mr. Bennett told her they were to have come on last Saturday, but were put back on her account.

The [sic] enjoyed the joke, and laughed most heartily. [...]

Mr. Bennett then conducted Mademoiselle Lind down the dark subterranean passage to the press rooms, where the huge wheels and machinery gathered up her dress, lest it should be mangled by the rush with which she was surrounded on every side. She appeared to be amazed at the complicated machinery of the press, but the moment they were put in motion and [illegible] the blank sheets [illegible] were instantaneously printed, she lifted up her bright countenance to Barnum as if to say, 'Is not this a wonderful country?'

[illegible] got to the carriage [illegible] which quickly collected on seeing the carriage. But when she was in the press room, the multitude had accumulated to such an extent that Fulton and Nassau streets, all round the *Herald* buildings, were filled with people. As soon as the door was opened, a rush was made from the outside and the office was filled. Her carriage, unfortunately, was not at the door, and she was thus delayed for some time when a further accession to the crowd took place, and they burst in the windows, and cheered and shouted in the most vociferous manner. It was necessary to send for some of the police officers of the Second ward to make a passage for her, and even with their assistance, and that of some other gentlemen, it was with the greatest difficulty she gained the carriage, when the cheering became most vociferous. The people seemed mad with excitement. The most popular woman in the world is Jenny Lind. She then proceeded with her suite down to Wall street on business, returned through Broadway to the Irving House, where she called upon Mrs. Bennett, then returned uptown to the New York Hotel. No states, no person, no human being, ever entered this country that can produce or prolong an excitement equal to that caused by the great art, the great genius, and still greater heart of purity and independence, possessed by Jenny Lind.

[illegible]

[illegible] they, 'it followwe him at some slight automatic distance.

The family slaves now paid along behind, making out all this whatever they might. I can envision certain older slaves being pulled along by more venturesome youngsters. (Tomorrow, their owner will circulate among them and quiz them all as to their favorite dwarfs and beasts. He will elucidate what he can of these attractions' histories and facts. And then, at dinner later, over the capon, the Spode, he will charmingly describe the partial droll comprehensions of these persons—so designed around the tasks he has assigned them, persons abducted for their heat-resistance and because they *could* be caught then bought that he now mostly thinks of them *as* those tasks. If with extras. He makes a comic talk from such small confusions about geography by these persons—abducted from a geography then sold into this terror of oddity and work. But my forebear would never, not for anything, allow any house slave serving dinner to overhear even one such fond and lightly told story of the others, oh no. One had one's scruples.)

BUT, PRAY, WATCH HIM SHEPHERD his fond and, today, cooperative crew. See him lead them all into the first of Barnum's tents of oddities—And then tell me, Reader, please, oh tell me, what on this earth might ever be odder than these clean if roughly dressed black and brown and blue-black people following three to five paces behind their serious, dandified, and, he might say, "loving" master? Who could ever afford to pay admission to such a marvel as any one person who feels entitled, because growing and harvesting cotton is so labor-intensive, to say he needs to own these other people? Springing, as I do, from such a tradition, what have Freak Shows to tell me? What, from even Mr. Barnum's own worst lurid organ-grinding nightmare, could ever outstrip the Surpassing Strangeness of All That Is Merely Real, Because Certain Powerful Persons *Wanted* to Own These Other People and Nobody Could Stop Them?

I START AND END WITH THE NAMES of the family slaves. They are listed yet on census records. And because I am the eldest of four sons, had I come of age in 1850 and not a hundred years later, my household property would now include:

Percie, Hap, Circe, Rob, Nance, Baby Nance, and Pompey.

A whole book might be written about that little [illegible]

THE LAST YEAR

BY EAVAN BOLAND

EIGHTEEN FIFTY IN IRELAND. AFTER the famine, the typhus, the blackened bodies at the roadside, this was a year of sailing ships. The catastrophe had happened. And now every week, sometimes twice a week, the sea road to America was worn down with the Irish fleeing the nightmare.

By 1850, the Atlantic crossing was practiced, almost routine. These were packet ships, sometimes carrying no more than sixty passengers. The big masts and cracking canvases plied in and out of Irish and English harbors. Their captains were Charons in reverse, carrying their passengers away from the underworld. Not all were fit for the job. Not until September of 1850 did the Board of Trade in London introduce the Mercantile Marine Act, which required a formal exam for a captain's ticket.

The spring months were the busiest. The ships sailed out of Cork, Belfast, Liverpool, Dublin. Every wall, every farm gate and public-house door, was covered with the smudged, inky posters, with their crude handbill lettering, telling passengers to assemble at this dock or that on the chosen date. They were strangely matter-of-fact, these posters. They spoke of sailing dates and referred to "a Fair Wind." They promised "Breadstuffs, Pork, Vinegar, etc., found according to law." Above all they promised escape.

On April 20, 1850, the *Hannah*, a brig built for the purpose, smoothed down the Shannon, passed the Cliffy Mountains, and navigated the fifty miles to the open sea, landing her passengers safely at South Street Seaport forty-three days later. A few hours later the *Maria Brennan* followed her. Four days later, the *Triumph*, made in Youghal of local elm and black birch, carried her ironic name and ninety-seven passengers across the Atlantic. The *Congress*, bound for Quebec, followed a few days later.

THE POTATO BLIGHT HAD LASTED five years. Folly and hypocrisy and the deepest inhumanity, masquerading as economic theory, had accompanied it every step of the way. In the worst hours of the famine, the Limerick docks had been piled with pork, butter, and oats for transport to England. The Irish would continue. But they would never forget that their people had died, degraded by hunger and disease, within miles of plenty and harvest. Now that healthy potatoes were coming out of the ground—this was the year the blight began to recede—grief, rancor, disbelief, remained. And now everyone, far and near, wanted to have a say. Only the victims were silent.



EMIGRANTS ARRIVAL AT [illegible]

BETWEEN TWO FIRES

Letter to Leopold I, King of the Belgians, from Queen Victoria, Queen of England

Windsor Castle,
22nd November 1850.

My Dearest Uncle, Accept my best thanks for your kind letter of the 17th, and the dear little Elizabeth one from dear little Charlotte, which is very much prized and does both its writers great credit. I send her my photograph, and a little Book for the Birthday of our Blessed Angel Child. I hope the will of [illegible] Oberglockner [illegible] for the little children might [illegible] just sufficient for their present wants for them and [illegible] our children [illegible] Yesterday Lady [illegible] she lives [illegible]

The state of the Continent [illegible] the folly of Austria and the giving way of Prussia are [illegible] Our influence on the Continent [illegible] And I feel this we are [illegible] here in the country, a [illegible] Protestant feeling and an enraged Catholic feeling in Ireland. I believe that Austria fans the flame at Rome and [illegible] Continent is [illegible] Protestant, and [illegible] and this is complicated, and we have (thanks to Lord Palmerston) [illegible] against it all!

[illegible] Louise seems only to increase as time goes on.

Every the cool Hawthorn of Bringo [illegible] surprisingly perhaps—as Mitchel wrote in his *Jail Journal*—"Our talk was all of Ireland." And that also is history.

Till there was more. In 1850 the Irish Franchise Act, rushed through the British Parliament, overhauled the antiquated voter registration system but hardly helped. Property was a qualification for voting. Small tenant farmers who had survived the Famine continued to find themselves forever excluded. And so in the autumn of the year, a priest in County Clare tells his congregation: "My advice to you is to throw over the legal rights of the landlords and to seek for your just rights and not your legal rights." That too becomes part of the record.

In 1850—according to numbers assembled late in 1849—some 250,000 Irish people were in workhouses. In April of 1850, Castlebar workhouse in Mayo—one of the worst hit areas of the Famine—reports that it no longer has bedding for its inmates, only straw. But the past, by definition, is not a series of measurable statistics. It is also the shame, the silence. It is what is willfully forgotten.

THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF THE Famine is not hard to find. It can be traced to the cobbled, purplish root that had come into Ireland in the sixteenth century. It was simple to put down in shallow soil, took up little room, could be taken hot with nothing more than a sprinkle of coarse salt. In fact, a grown man could eat fourteen pounds of potatoes in a single day, drinking yellow buttermilk to wash it down, and be slightly taller at adulthood than his English equivalent. For the Irish—desperately poor and with little land—it seemed the perfect food source.

By the 1840s, two fifths, or three million, of the Irish people depended on potatoes grown in so-called lazy beds—ridges, made of piled turf between deep runnels, laced with lime and manure, where the seed potatoes were inserted after a hole was made with an implement called a "spud." It was a strange and despised agricultural art, this—travelers to the country were shocked and disapproving—but it worked. Until, that is, the Famine. Then when the potato was hit by a vicious fungus, everything—the lazy beds, the diet, the dependence of the people—was shown to be a wretched recipe for the defenseless.

And so to the sailing ships. For now the traffic of the ships began to be matched by a huge new traffic—the traffic of emigrant letters. The more the ships landed their passengers on the shores of the New World, the more the old one began to hear of their survival.

On September 22, 1850, a young woman named Margaret McCarthy wrote back to her father, trying to persuade him to follow her. She had

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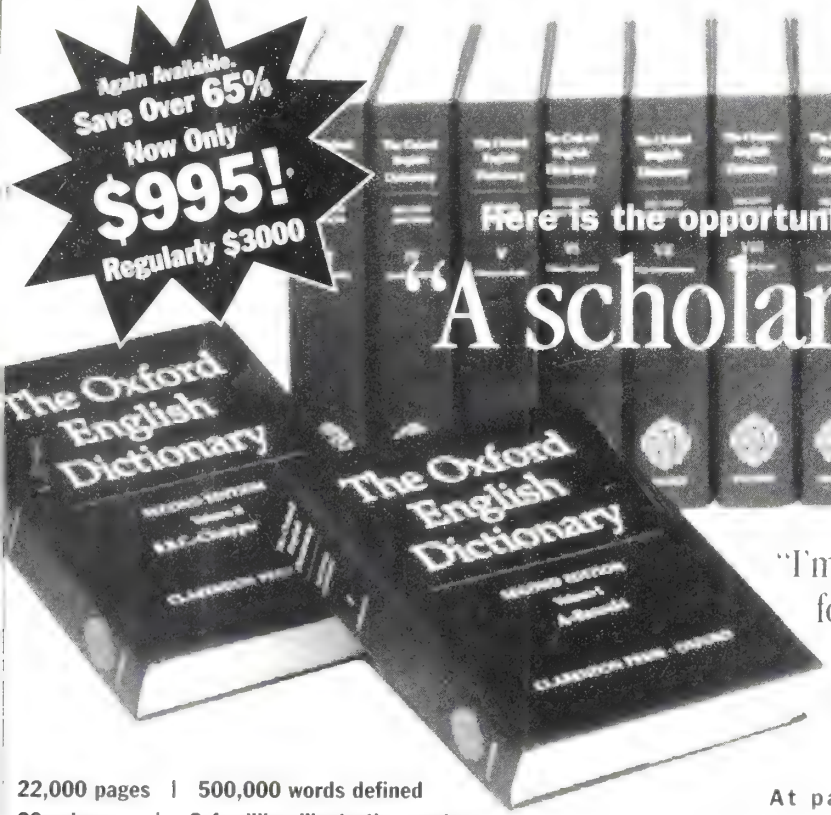
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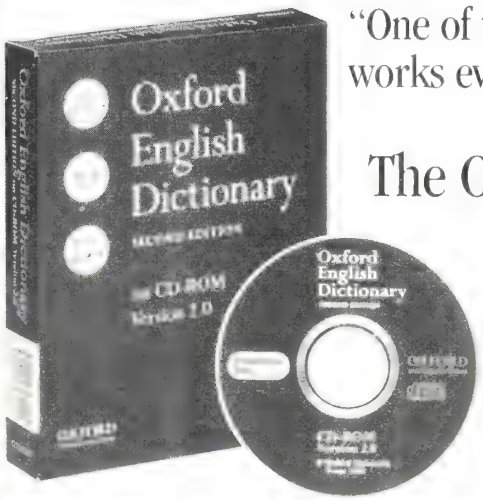
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quence opens a window into the smashed dreams

Whatever helped her with those words, the tone is one of hope. Hers is, in a way, the voice of the future. The Irish would survive on both sides of the Atlantic. They would prosper. They would even triumph, though they would never forget. But the darker sound, the unarchived, unspoken, senseless misery of the past, remains

TWO DREAMS OF CALIFORNIA

BY CECELIA HOLLAND

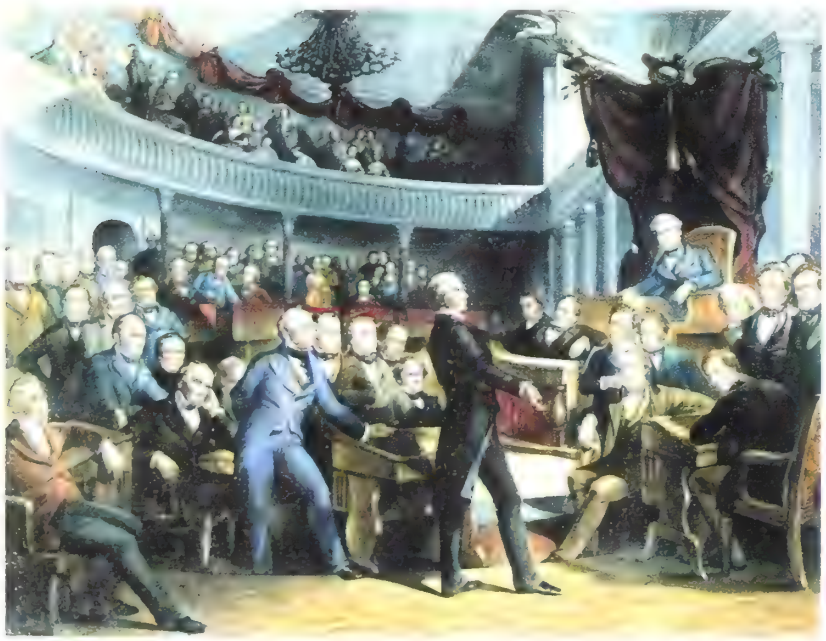
CALIFORNIA HAS ALWAYS BEEN A place of dreams, and in the middle of the 19th century, poised between the wish of the Pioneers and the High Sierra neglected by the Mexican government, the province's mild climate and easy living drew adventurers. John Charles Frémont, John Sutter, and Sam Brannan, whose ambition was one of the biggest. He wanted to start his own country.

In 1846 Brannan, a tall, restless New Englander who sometime Mormon, always on the make, had signed on a band of settlers and sailed around the Horn to make himself the master of California. He got there only days too late. When his ship sailed into San Francisco Bay he found the American flag flying above its tiny presidio—raised when the United States seized California at the beginning of the Mexican War. "There's that damned flag again," Brannan is alleged to have said.

By 1850, with California on the brink of statehood, he was one of the richest men in the world. Two years earlier, catching wind of the secret find in the Sierra, Brannan had run through the mud of San Francisco shouting, "Gold! Gold! Gold on the American River!" A hundred thousand greedy young men heard him. Over the next few years they swarmed into California, and on their way to the goldfields, most of them went through Brannan's general-merchandise store in Sacramento, buying clothes and food, shovels and pans, shoes and guns and knives and maps.

Although few miners ever made a dime, Brannan made a mint. As for his dream of dominion, even that still seemed possible in 1850, when California was finally admitted to the United States.

This had been a surprising struggle. The United States Congress had been very reluctant to admit California, in spite of her obvious bounties and abundance of Americans, because it set serious structural problems in the federal government itself. The country's rapid expansion was forcing the national argument over slavery. The free states resented the power of the southern slave states in Congress and saw each new slave state admitted as an expansion of that power; many suspected the South of instigating the Mexican War to add vast new territories to its control. The southern slave states saw each new free state as strengthening their commercial rivals in the North and threatening their power base in Washington. With Californians demanding statehood, the clash was on: slave or free?



nther way, California would tip the balance of per-
aps moved it.

As Congress debated the issue in session after
session, Californians lost patience. Since the end
of the Mexican War the land seen governed
military governors doing little but squabble among
themselves while the state filled up with desper-
te young men, mostly armed, often drunk, and
ll of them wild to get rich. For nearly eighteen
months, California had had no civil government
t all, and when, in the spring of 1849, Congress
ailed once again to answer the question of state-
ood, influential men took matters into their
own hands. They elected delegates to a con-
stitutional convention, held in great style at
Monterey, and wrote themselves a constitu-
tion, then they held elections for governor
and senators. These congressmen then went
o Washington, to take their seats in the
government and bring California into the
Union by *fait accompli*.

The constitution written in Monterey out-
awed slavery, and although admitting Cali-
ornia on these terms would infuriate the south-
ern states, the arrival of the delegation in
Washington sparked an emotional surge of sup-
port in Congress. In an effort to keep everybody
happy, Henry Clay, the great Kentucky states-
man, cobbled together the Compromise of 1850.
This legislative Frankenstein monster was meant
o solve several annoying national problems and
hereby give all involved something that they
vanted. At one stroke it admitted California,
and Texas's debts to Mexico, and, to mollify the
South, beefed up the Fugitive Slave Act.

On the face of it, the measure was a colossal fail-
ure. The North hated the draconian and brutal
Fugitive Slave Act as much as the South hated the
admission of a free California. The gulf in the
nation was widening beyond the point where
words could bridge it. Only California liked the
Compromise of 1850. When the news of admis-
sion reached San Francisco by steamship, the city
erupted into one of the great parties of the mid-
century. Sam Brannan's dream of California was
coming true.

ACROSS THE BAY FROM SAN FRAN-
isco, in the mostly unbuilt city he was going to
ame for himself, another ambitious man with a
dream for California had reason to celebrate the
ews. Don Mariano Vallejo, one of the greatest
andowners in Mexican California, had worked
ong and hard to bring his homeland into the
United States. Although he had grown up in old
California, served in the Mexican Army, and ac-
quired his huge landholdings as a result, long be-
ore the Mexican War he had lost patience with
he ineptitude of his own government and was an
enthusiast of American energy and institutions.
He had served [illegible] Commissioner [illegible]
a Monterey [illegible] and [illegible]
estate [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
American ideals supported his own vision of a
California where all people would live in order
and peace, if not equality.

Vallejo's conception of the [illegible] was
not democratic. Before the American [illegible]





California was a rough version of feudal Spain, and
that was what the Democrats to preserve. Valle-
jo envisioned himself and other great landowners
as the aristocrats, the American merchants a thriving,
prosperous commercial class, and the Indians as
laborers, all in a [illegible] California. Frederick
Hendricks and Little coastal towns. He saw himself
as a benevolent old Roman, looking after the best
interests of his people. He ran for California's
new state senate and won. He gave California
his new city, 150 acres, for a capital and helped
it as well a huge amount of cash to pay for govern-
ment buildings, a university, a governor's mansion,
an insane asylum. His fellow legislators applaud-
ed him with enthusiasm, lavished him with praises.
For a moment, looking over his carefully plot-
ted town, the Don of Sonoma could imagine
himself a prince of California.

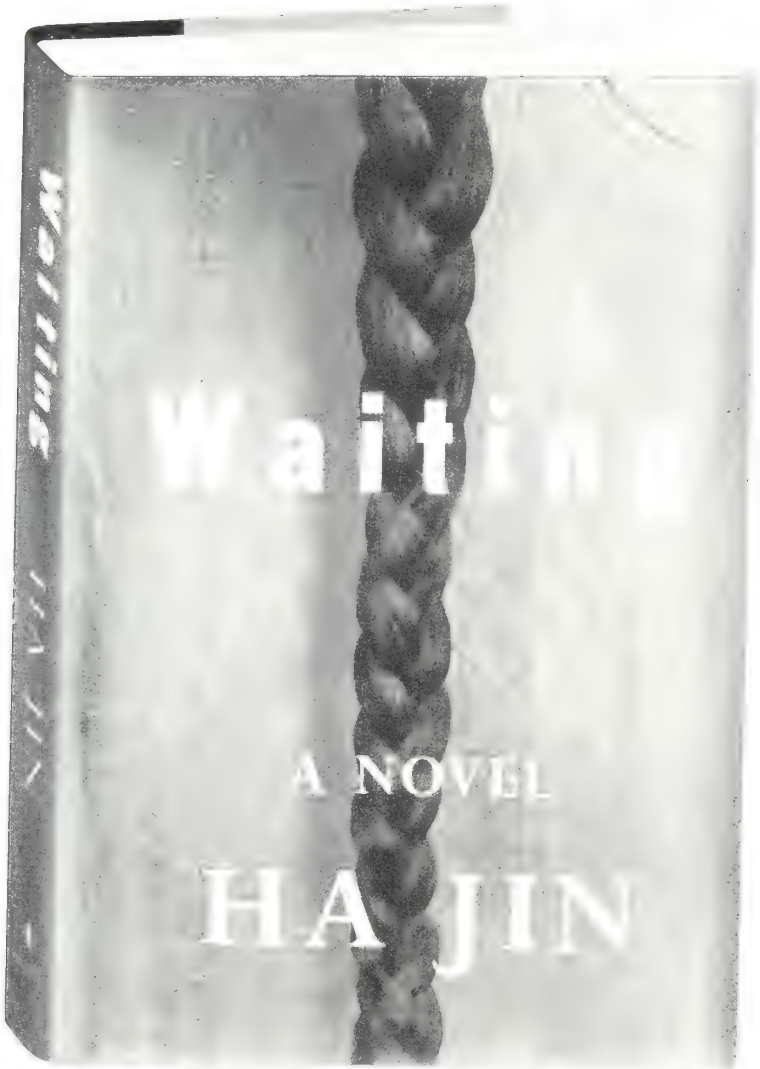
He had misread the Land of Americans he were
dealing with and the pace of change that the
Compromise would bring about. The Constitu-
tional Convention in Monterey had renounced
slavery not because the delegates were outraged
over its cruelty or its injustice. But because they
saw slavery as unfair competition for free white
workers. Many of the American delegates to the
convention were actively seeking an all-white
California. Their opinion was the majority's. The
Know-Nothing Party, that strange political haven
of nativists, anti-Catholics, and thugs, had its
brief ascendancy elsewhere in the United States
and died away, but it flourished in California in
the 1850's, and the Know Nothings were

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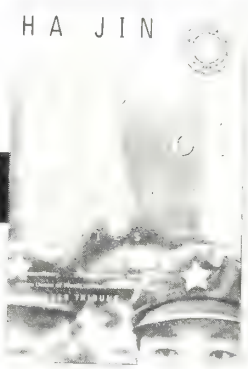
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Subject to proof to the contrary, the theory that Europeans developed practical tolerance and a belief in human rights because they were constantly liberated in the New World by the discovery of primitive societies that they could then exploit, or even annihilate, without moral compunction, is a theory that I find persuasive. And although I certainly would not want to think that the native people were extinct, were degraded, were assimilated, should be assimilated, Brannan's brand of ethnic cleansing gradually gave way to the more inclusive ideal of California. Especially in the northwest, native numbers have recovered. There are perhaps as many as 500,000 Native Americans today, and tribes once again perform their religious ceremonies and teach their languages and history to the children. The way Don Marquis's cheerful mehitabel would have startled Lum, but he had been on the right track.



THE IMPROVED MAN

BY KEVIN BAKER

Motto engraved above the door of An-
drew Jackson Downing's home.

IN 1850, ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING
looked out from the highest tower of Warwick
Castle and decided that England
was a great country for the growth of men in its
aristocratic upper class
but to America
was committed the sacred duty of working out the great moral and humanity—that of the abolition of all castes, and the recognition of the divine rights of every human soul.

There was an enormous Warwick vase on Downing's estate, etched with fantastic arabesques around the bowl and set out at the end of his splendid, velvet lawn
it formed one of his exquisite vistas of the river and the rolling hills of the Hudson Valley. His perfect little picture, in which
every tree, every magnolia bush and wisteria arbor and the gazebo were placed to reveal what Downing wanted them to see—the river, the hills, the natural beauty—
and conceal what he did not want to see—the mills in Newburgh, the factories in Cornwall, New York, with its factories, and its cotton mill, and the
[illegible]
Downing's guests came downstairs in the morning to find the white gravel paths already raked. The plush, tinted lawns already
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

marigolds and asters and carnations for the brilliant and gay.

And after breakfast there would be boating and long walks, and archery, and books and conversation. And after dinner, out on the moonlit summer lawn, they would make music and sample new wines, they would sing "Oh, Fly to the Prairie" and "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep," and there would be charades around the giant Warwick vase, but Downing
who was good at everything
was too reserved to make himself understood.

With Downing there were always mysteries within mysteries, secrets within secrets
beginning with himself.
In social intercourse, he was like two persons; the one conversed with you pleasantly upon every topic, the other watched you from behind that pleasant talk, like a sentinel.

At sixteen Andrew Jackson Downing was a slender, watchful boy, with luminous brown eyes. Son of a wheelwright, from an old Puritan family
(a man who had left his first wife and family in Boxford, Massachusetts, and went west to start over again, to raise a new family and speculate in real estate and start a tree nursery).

His formal education was over. He knew the classics. He was taught mechanical drawing and landscape drawing and translated articles from the original French. He liked to swim across the broad, deceptive river with its treacherous crosscurrents and take walks in the woods and fields of the river's banks observing everything.

It might not have been enough
[illegible]
to have worked the tree nursery, and he was soon renowned in Newburgh for cultivating
[illegible] fruit trees, apples and

200 separate varieties of pear

turning out fruit more quickly than the industrialists turned out styles of hats or shoes in their factories down in the town.

That was where he might have strayed

One more quietly frustrated, self-made man in a provincial town. Like thousands of other self-made men, stranded along every river and prairie bluff of the sprawling new nation. Churning out his pears and apples.

Then something happened. A miraculous story—a ridiculous story, really. A purely *American* story.

He met a baron

The Baron Alois Freiherr von Lederer, Austria's consul general in New York

who also liked to walk the hills and woods, collecting rare specimens of rocks and shells. One day he came across another rare specimen

the quiet boy, with luminous brown eyes, and before the afternoon was over they had become fast friends.

Downing showed the Baron

all of his favorite places, and the Baron taught him

botany and mineralogy, and introduced him to the great families that lived along the river. He brought him to

Edward Armstrong, who lived in a Greek Revival temple up over the Danskammer—the flat, jutting rock where Henry Hudson had once seen the Indians at their pagan dances

Edward Armstrong, the *beau idéal* of river society, who played the violin and wrote poems, and danced a perfect double pigeonwing, and raised thoroughbred horses in his stables and Southdown sheep along his broad meadows

and his wife, who painted watercolors, and spoke flawless French and Italian, and played the piano, and was witty and gay and beautiful—

Downing

set out to study them, as he would the rocks and the plants, and the dead birds and the mummified bones of lizards he found in the fields and the woods. And they took him in

charmed by his innate good manners, by his quiet and graceful nature, and Downing decided

to resist his mother's urgings that he apprentice as a clerk in a dry-goods store.

By nineteen he was landscape architect and gardener to the great, old river families

more aloof in their way than even the codfish aristocracy of Boston or the planters of Charleston—these Van Rensselaers and Van Wycks, these Roosevelts and Delanos, these Schuylers and De Peysters and Van Cortlandts and Brinckerhoffs.

Yet who

were willing to accommodate talented and persistent outsiders, ever since the Englishmen showed up in New Amsterdam harbor

with their money.

It was a bad time for the river families.

They were cashing in their birthright, in the unspeakable City. Building redoubts against the tenant farmers they treated like serfs. Throwing up one imitation Greek temple after another, in tribute to the austere ideals of the Republic they despised. Even importing Mexican stone warriors and jaguars and winged serpents, to plant up in the hills and pretend that they had always been there and always would be, never mind

the Indians who used to dance along the Danskammer rock or the unfortunate Tories whose lands and homes they nested in like so many wasps.

Downing taught them

how to blend in.

He taught them how to make their homes and their gardens look like something that had sprung up naturally from the Hudson landscape.

He taught them that

landscape and architecture must fit the country around it. Both must heed the land, the climate where they were set, but neither

was supposed to *imitate* nature. Nature must always serve man. Nature was always there to be improved upon whether that meant

vegetables and fruits or landscapes or human civilization.

(Downing

regretted the absence of the Indians along the Danskammer but felt it was inevitable

that they should go.)



Above all

Downing was determined

to improve himself. He learned how to dress and to dance. He ate and drank little, never used tobacco. Wore his thick dark hair long over his collar.

Visitors thought he might have been a Spanish aristocrat, fresh from the Escorial. He was tall and erect, spoke and walked with an easy, learned elegance.

He learned

the river.

Hudson—

It was called Locust Grove, for the trees grown

in taste, but there was no getting around age.)

daughter was a bright young, birdlike woman

hair and a ready wit.

AN ADVERTISEMENT

&c.; and, finally, imagine that these voracious monsters

purchase a Tubular Filter that

the Croton from all the mud and decayed animal and

tains. I shall lose much of my

They were married with a grand dance and

Caroline watched through a telescope across the river as he built their new home. Tying a

the evening, daubing a board with a black mark

well

sandstone where inside

all the forms and colors, the style of the furniture,

There

pregnant with light . . . a sort of imprisoni

While outside were his tinted lawns, and copses of elms and lindens, and ashes and yellow horse chestnuts, and spruces and fern-leaved beeches

sundials and hermitages and other improvements upon Nature. His Warwick vase and his Borghese vase, and

porches.

Porches were Downing's grand idea in microcosm, the vital link that tied the home to the outdoors

the civilized to the wild. For Downing was doing more than simply showing how a villa, he was inventing

The suburb.

Just as the porch united home and nature, the suburb could be suspended halfway between the barbarism of the wilderness and the grime and din

nihilat

Downing anticipated the

that would in and of themselves promote

the poets and painters and witty young people and

uniforms.

It was

fruits and trees.

his wisteria-covered trellises and greenhouses filled

ith flowers and plants and trees his father in
w's whalers brought home from around the
orld, his books on the virtuous and elegant and
bove all affordable home
favorite wedding presents ubiquitous on night-
tands and securing Downing's reputation as
the National Arbiter of Taste

Yet home
was not all it seemed.
The sepia sandstone actually stucco common
applied. And even so
the debts kept mounting. The
ouse had replaced too many of
he profitable nursery trees, and
owning was always extravagant
Late one night a guest in the li-
rary saw to his amazement a book-
helf swing open on noiseless hinges
revealing a secret chamber
where Downing labored into the
ight, under the white plaster busts
f his heroes
Dante and Milton and Petrarch
nd Franklin and Linnaeus and
coto
staring down at him as he edit-
d the *Horticulturist*, and wrote his
ooks on landscaping and archi-
ecture, and fruit and botany. But
hen even
old John Peter DeWint sued him
ver money and put encumbrances
n his home, and soon Downing
as forced to sell
the splendid tree nursery
The home and the dream slowly slipping away,
ike some lovely, disabled sailboat
carried off on the Hudson

His friends preserved him. They kept him
loat until he won his suit, got the liens removed
om his
home.
In 1850 Downing was
commissioned to transform the bleak and fetid
ullies that surrounded the White House and the
apitol into a grand national garden.
By the time he sailed to England in July he
as
a celebrity
feted everywhere he went.
And he in turn was enthralled by London. By
the galleries of art, public libraries, parks and gar-
ens, which have raised the people in social *civiliza-*
on to a far higher degree than we have yet attained
republican America
Where
the slums were teeming with immigrants, fill
ng up with radical Germans and starving Irish.

The City [illegible]
sewers run up [illegible]
and butcher [illegible]

There were
bloody [illegible]
for Place, thirty-one [illegible]
named Dic Ayam Macready [illegible]
tors' Riot and the Hour [illegible]
Brs' Riot and the Quaker [illegible]
city were appalled by the [illegible]
the crowded tenements [illegible]



But Downing had plans; he always had plans; he
brought back from England
remembered some architectural [illegible]
whom he had met in picture galleries and [illegible]
vinced to return with him to America [illegible]
spot furnished Hunt's philanthropic correspon-
dent for the *Home Journal* named Frederick Law
Olmsted. For Downing had decided

If the people would not come to the country, why,
not bring
the country to the people

What was needed were
a park.
A vast, new park that would
have room for parkside mansions and concert
halls and art galleries, and science museums and
horticultural societies
and a tree farm, so mothers would not have
buy the blue tinted, tuberculin milk [illegible]
kept by Manhattan distilleries [illegible]
whiskey mash.

brawling
drinking
and playing baseball.)

By the summer of 1852 plans for the park were proceeding apace, and he had commissions in Newport and plans to start a new magazine called

Downing was forty-six, and

he and Caroline only seemed to grow more handsome, even younger with age.

That June they held a feast of roses, and it

to what they supposed would be another party across the river.

Then one of Downing's friends noticed

with the trees

on the summer moonlight

of mortal agony. She

was a widow, a woman named Matilda

to both Downing and his wife. And as they drifted back across the calm river at midnight, Downing confided that she had

Years ago it was she he

the river to see. No doubt he could swim it still.

and romantic notions, influenced no doubt by old stories and moonlight on the river.

Waiting in Newburgh, with Downing and Caroline and the family, for the next steamboat to take them down to Manhattan.

and

bearing down full speed on the dock

where Downing and his family waited.

They got on. Another mystery.

Perhaps Downing was simply in a hurry to get up to Newport, or maybe it was

that he loved the steamboats

floating jewel boxes with their chandeliers and their orchestras and deck-top cotillions. Their velvet couches and magnificent carpets used by

drummers and egg dealers and peanut politicians and self-made, self-righteous, self-satisfied men of every variety. Speechifying about politics and religion and the great issues of the day over their

beefsteaks and buckwheat cakes and buttered toast. Sleeping 500 to a cabin, in long white rows of triple-tiered beds.

They were another one of his Parks, another one of his Porches, his republican openings—

By three o'clock the race was nearly won. The *Henry Clay* speeding through the Tappan Zee, almost to Manhattan, when someone noticed

the first wisp of smoke, floating up through the hatchway. A fireman staggered up on deck, clothes on fire, and within seconds

the whole midship was in flames. The passengers screaming and running to aft while Collyer

too late emerged from his fever dream, swung hard for the east bank. The engineer tying down the throttle before he fled the boiler room.

She burrowed

twenty-five feet up the shore and eight feet into a railroad embankment.

The fire moving back toward the stern, which lay still in deep water. The passengers trapped there, those who could not swim. But Downing

calmly strode the deck. Helping his wife and children into the water. Handing them down deck chairs to float on, and

Caroline made it to shore, where she

gathered up her children and watched the rescues and

the gathering of bodies till nightfall. The Hudson calm now, bodies still floating in the clear November water. Until at last

she returned to the house at Highland Gardens where they came to tell her the next day

that her mother and husband were dead.

Downing

last seen trying to help the struggling Mrs. Wadsworth, but they found them drowned

wrapped in each other's arms.

On the floor of the Senate

Stephen Douglas and Charles Sumner compared him to Washington, and

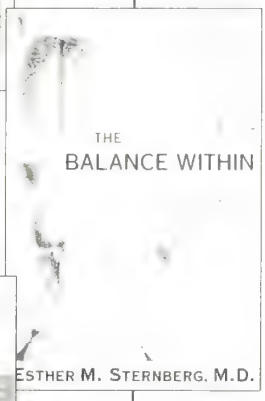
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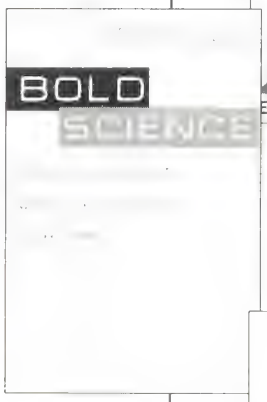


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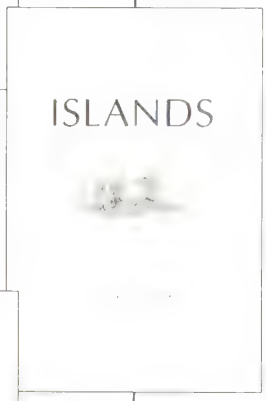
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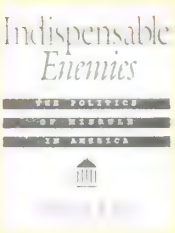
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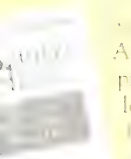
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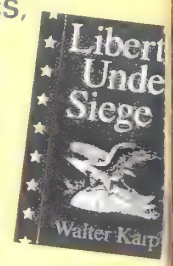
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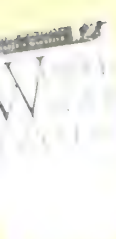
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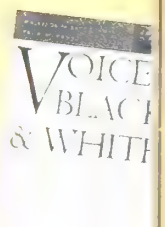
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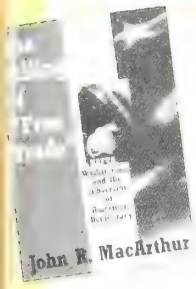
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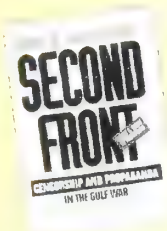
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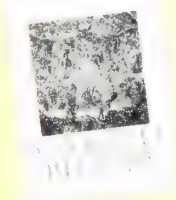
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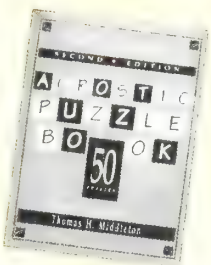
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Downing left to sell out the house and the fur
[illegible] and the ornaments, but
eventually she remarried
and the house was torn down
like so many of the grand homes Downing had landscaped along the Hudson.

His widow and friends put up a monument in Washington
in the shape of the great Warwick vase that had sat upon his perfect lawn. Around the bowl were the words that he had written:

Plant grounds, parks, cemeteries, and unlock their gates as wide as the gates of the morning, to the whole people.

Nothing else remained
save for the great park in the middle of New York
and the mysteries.

AN EXPEDITION MAP

BY ANNIE PROULX

SOME YEARS AGO, WALKING ALONG Blake Street in Denver, I saw in the window of The Old Map Gallery a large and beautiful map showing the red thread of a journey from the Missouri River to Utah's Pilot Peak. Inside the shop the brick walls reflected a mellow light. There was the slightly bitter smell of old paper. The blunt snout of the Internet had not yet forced its way into this cabinet where the events of the past, business interests, political ambitions, science, folly, adventure, and art came together on sheets of paper.

The map I admired was one of two companions to the *Report* of the Stansbury Expedition of 1849–1850, "a Reconnaissance between Fort Leavenworth on the Missouri River, and the Great Salt Lake in the Territory of Utah." I live in the center of this map, the Medicine Bow country of Wyoming, within the great curve of the North Platte River. Not far from my house, emigrant wheel ruts are still clear 150 years after they were cut into the hard prairie soil. It seems to me that I walk through this map every day, that the rumble I strike at heaven's entrance has lately told [illegible] the yellow light that tells us men and [illegible] mountains, to cotton print houses [illegible] Fremont I bought the Stansbury.

The map, tinted with palest color, was drawn by Lieutenant John Williams Gunnison of the Topographical Engineers and [illegible] Stansbury's party. Gunnison, another Corps officer, was assigned to Captain Howard Stansbury [illegible] Topographical Engineers, who had served in the Seminole campaign before transferring in 1838 [illegible] Topographical Corps. His instructions for the Stansbury Expedition went beyond survey and map, for he wrote *The Mormons*, the first objective account of the Salt Lake [illegible].

Preuss had accompanied dashing Frémont on three expeditions to Oregon and California in the 1840s. Lieutenant G. K. Warren of the Corps later wrote of him that his "skill in sketching topography in the field and in representing it on the map has probably never been surpassed in this country." When Preuss hanged himself in 1854, his wife sent his private diaries to relatives in Germany, pages that described in short, mordant sentences his years of expeditionary work in the American West. In one of history's little ironies the diaries were partially destroyed in the World War II bombing of Hamburg.

The independent pioneer is part of the myth of the American West. The everyday reality in 1850 was that the U.S. government greased the pioneer's skids with surveyed passages, detailed maps and expedition reports, protective troops, forts, and supply outposts, treaties with Indian tribes, subsidized roads, trails, and, eventually, railroads. The major agents of the scientific exploration of America were the United States Army's Corps of Topographical Engineers. Their complex duties included surveying, mapping, and boundary marking, notes on flora and fauna, geography, geology, noting advantageous military positions, reporting on river hydraulics, assessing the characters and cultures of Indian tribes—in short, learning the total content of new and unexplored country, including its inhabitants, in addition to their military responsibilities.

Howard Stansbury is not often mentioned in popular histories of the West, overshadowed by more glamorous explorers. He was not a graduate of West Point as most Topographical Corps officers were, and much of his earlier work as a civil engineer fell on the tame side, careful surveys of harbors from New Hampshire to the Dry Tortugas. When Colonel J. J. Abert, head of "Corps T.E." assigned Stansbury the reconnaissance of the Salt Lake re-



fornia emigrants. They followed the overland [illegible] Creek [illegible] Red Butte crossing, then deviated briefly from the main trail [illegible] rocks and Echo.

[illegible] arrived at Fort Bridger in August, where- [illegible] established headquarters for all [illegible] the way) continued west along the emigrant road and Stansbury, accompanied by Jim Bridger as guide, looked for a possible shortcut to the Humboldt River. The party regrouped in Salt Lake, [illegible] to record [illegible] the Mormons with enormous suspicion. Conferences with Brigham [illegible] Stansbury declared that he wished [illegible] Mormons to help with the surveying and mapping calmed the situation, for now the Mormons could keep a direct eye on what the federal men were doing. Gunnison began his survey of the Jordan River and Utah Valley regions with the help of Albert Carrington, a Mormon important in church and government affairs, and Stansbury headed north exploring. Carrington, [illegible] Vermont and [illegible] graduate of Dartmouth [illegible] his [illegible] present [illegible] from original Greek oration turned out to have been written by Thucydides), became a valuable member of the survey and accompanied the party back to Washington to advise on the maps.

[illegible] Stansbury circumnavigated Great Salt Lake [illegible] and the western shore explored [illegible] and [illegible] to Fiker Peak. In the spring of 1850 while Gunnison mapped the settled valleys, Stansbury rigorously surveyed the lake with a large crew that included Carrington as straw boss. All eleven species of mosquitoes that inhabit the Great Salt Lake attacked the party. The expedition artist, Englishman John Hudson, [illegible] that the [illegible] & [illegible] musquitoes are already beginning to sharpen their beaks upon the whetstones which they are said to carry under [illegible]

[illegible] Stansbury [illegible] mostly about Dr. James Blake, the expedition's physician-botanist-[illegible]ist-naturalist (a role more suited to Stephen [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] all the mineralogical & botanical specimens, those [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] fishing lines, paper &c &c . . ." He was dismissed [illegible] Salt Lake [illegible] journals. Stansbury sued Blake for [illegible] to trial. The Mormon court found for Stansbury [illegible] pen letter to the secretary of war back in Washington with claims for back pay and accusations that Stansbury had deceived him, was given to [illegible] replied with a fiercely indignant letter backed [illegible] letters from Gunnison and Carrington. The War Department declined Dr. Blake's demands;

he pursued [illegible] in [illegible] California life.

In August the survey work was completed. The expedition headed east again, making numerous side trips to map the Wasatch creeks. Shortly after leaving Fort Bridger they bore east along Bitter Creek, parallel with, but many miles south of, the worn emigrant trail. Stansbury noted extensive coal outcrops near present-day Rock Springs, and a section of the map was lettered "Coal Basin." The Union Pacific later ran its entire operation on the famous Rock Springs coal.

The original plan for the return trip called for Stansbury to cut south to the Arkansas River. Instead he skirted the north end of the Medicine Bows, crossed the rolling Laramie plains and headed for the Black Hills (today, the Laramie Range in southeastern Wyoming) and into the Cheyenne Pass. Here, along the forty-first parallel, the expedition discovered a gradual slope and the shortest route from the eastern plains through the Rockies. Stansbury said in the *Report*:

> It has been ascertained that a practicable route lies through the chain of the Rocky Mountains on a direct line south, that is, exactly parallel and in close proximity to the line of the Union Pacific Railroad.

His plan now was to explore the region in detail, but an embarrassing accident put him in a military ambulance for the rest of the journey. Stansbury's official comment was:

> While encamped on the Chugwater I sustained a severe injury by a fall, which not only incapacitated me for mounting my horse, but contracted me together so much that I could not walk for [illegible] months.

A full [illegible] from his horse was implied (and so accepted), but Gunnison noted that Stansbury had (in the words of Carl I. Wheat) "aimed a kick at a dog which had invaded his tent, and disastrously missed his aim," whereas Albert Carrington wrote in *his* diary that Stansbury had "hurt himself kicking one of his boys out of his tent."

The *Report* was published in 1852 and did not attract much attention despite Stansbury's conviction that his forty-first parallel route was important. The story seems now to slide backward.

Gunnison was killed in 1853 by a party of Pahvant Indians while scouting the thirty-eighth parallel [illegible] railroad route. [illegible] several new expeditions launched after the Pacific Railroad Survey bill passed that year. The Stansbury *Report*, a year old, was ignored in Washington in favor of routes put forward by powerful [illegible] and business interests. It took years before Stansbury's [illegible] path was seriously reexamined [illegible] the Union Pacific, the Pony Express, the Overland Stage line, and Interstate [illegible] followed Stansbury's way. ■

HOW THE WEST WAS LOST

A road trip in search of the Oregon Trail

BY TOM CHAFFIN

There are places in the American West—a mountaintop, say, or a parking lot—where you can stand and know that right there, at precisely those coordinates, more than 150 years ago, John C. Frémont stopped, opened his journal, and wrote down what he saw. To do this, to stand in such places and read Frémont's notes, is to learn the truth of that old line "The past is another country." One of the most controversial figures of his era, Frémont was, variously, the leader of the conquest of California, a U.S. senator, a gold and railroad speculator, the first presidential candidate of the Republican Party (he lost to Buchanan in 1856), and a Union general in the Civil War. But it is Frémont "The Pathfinder" who is best remembered. In 1842 expansionists in Washington sent him on the first of two federal expeditions to survey what became known as the Oregon Trail. Illuminated with poetic observations and survival tips, the seven sequential maps that he and his cartographer, Charles Preuss, published in 1846—the second, third, and fourth of which appear in the following pages—served as a kind of Baedeker guide for the settlers who came caravanning in his footsteps, visiting themselves upon the West like a plague. By 1891 his wife, the author Jessie Benton Frémont, could say of him, with only slight exaggeration, "Railroads followed the lines of his journeyings—a nation followed his maps to their resting place—and cities have risen on the ashes of his lonely campfires." A few summers ago, accompanied by my wife, Meta, and our dog, Zoie, I embarked upon an adventure in anachronism, a pilgrimage in search of the country of the past. Traveling not by ox-drawn wagon but by sport-utility vehicle, guided by his journals and maps, we retraced Frémont's trail.

Tom Chaffin teaches U.S. history at Emory University. He is the author of Fatal Glory: Narciso Lopez and the First Clandestine U.S. War Against Cuba *and is completing a book about John C. Frémont and the Arts of Exploration.*



7

"The country here is exceedingly picturesque," Frémont noted
this level in the trail west along the Sweetwater River valle
"Everywhere the deep verdure and profusion of beautiful flowers
in pleasing contrast with the sterile grandeur of the rock and th
barrenness of the sandy plain." For the next 11 years, the area
mained so tranquil—a trickle of locals and discouraging words—th
a gas station and post office on the valley floor came to be know
as Home on the Range. But in 1956, Western Nuclear, Inc., bui
a uranium plant here and turned Home on the Range into a mi
ing camp called Jeffrey City. After uranium prices plummeted i
the early 1980s, Jeffrey City went bust. Today there's a clay-cappe
waste dump here and the groundwater is polluted with acid, heav
metals, and uranium. Across the plains Frémont so admired, wee
cracked macadam and gravel roads run from semi-deserted mi
ing towns to poetically named oil and gas fields (Crooks Ga
Lide, Antelope, Sheep Creek) scattered mining hills with name
like Oil Field Mountain and Telephone Line Ridge.

9

[illegible] Wind River Mountains, Frémont stared [illegible]
[illegible] the tallest mountain in the Rockies. "The
barometer stood at 18.293, the attached thermometer at 44°," he
[illegible] the elevation at the summit
[illegible] the moment, he retrieved from
his pack a U.S. flag emblazoned with a bald eagle clutching arrows
[illegible] Old Glory, he
[illegible] and eventually memorialized on a recent
[illegible] became a cinematic emblem of the West and
[illegible] but which peak, precisely, did the scale'
[illegible] called Frémont Peak (elevation, 13,745 feet)?
Or neighboring Gannet Peak (13,804 feet)? Or Woodrow Wilson
[illegible] The sextant chronometer,
[illegible] that the explorer used to make his calculations
[illegible] too imprecise to gauge accurately mountains that Frémont de-
[illegible] "Here, as elsewhere on the trail, the terrain that he instrumentally surveyed has receded into the hazy distances of history, leaving in its place the more vivid landscape of the mythical American frontier—a landscape that Frémont, with his journals and flags, helped create

8

Determined to draw their maps as accurately as possible, Frémont and his cartographer, Charles Preuss, treated the West as a vast tabula rasa, depicting only lands and landforms that they had personally surveyed; areas uncrossed by the expedition, like this one, were simply left blank. A hundred and fifty years later, there is hardly a square inch of America that hasn't been photographed from space, digitized, and posted on the Internet, let alone surveyed. This corner of Fremont County, Wyoming, is so empty that it's still easy to imagine what this terra incognita would have looked like, how terribly and magnificently strange it must have seemed—as strange as the moon is to the scientists in the East. Only today's government maps these sparsely populated areas look like this.



10

[illegible] Frémont [illegible] the West [illegible] the
[illegible] Rockies, [illegible] the [illegible]
[illegible] to [illegible] the [illegible]
[illegible] Pacific. [illegible] Frémont [illegible]
[illegible] through dynamited mountains, over canyons
[illegible] across landfilled swamps—from nearly everywhere

TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP

OF THE

ROAD FROM MISSOURI TO OREGON

COMMENCING AT THE MOUTH OF THE KANSAS IN THE MISSOURI RIVER

AND ENDING AT THE MOUTH OF THE WALLAH WALLAH IN THE COLUMBIA

In VII Sections

SECTION II

From the field notes and journal of Capt J C Fremont

and from sketches and notes made on the ground by his assistant [illegible]

Compiled in the Year [illegible]

By [illegible]

SCALE 10 MILES TO THE INCH



REMARKS

1 *The figures on the road indicate the distance in miles from Westport Landing*

2 *Game Antelope and Buffalo the latter in innumerable herds*

3 *Timber is extremely scarce except on the islands Nine drift-wood and buffalo [illegible] makes the fuel as that of the camels does in the desert of Arabia*

4 *Good guard ought to be kept Pawnees if they do not kill will at least take what they can from the travellers by force if they are strong enough and by stealth [illegible]*

5 *With this section the prairie ends and the barren sage artemisia [illegible] begins*


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Southeastern New Mexico is home to mesquite and chaparral, mesas and horizons that shimmer with heat. For animals of this parched land, survival comes with water. So people who work nearby helped design and build a system of dozens of unique watering units that gather, store and distribute water to bobcats, antelopes, hawks and more. Quenching nature's thirst and giving it a chance to survive.
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AMERICAN FUTURES, REMEMBERED AND FORETOLD

Cartoonists sketch the world to come

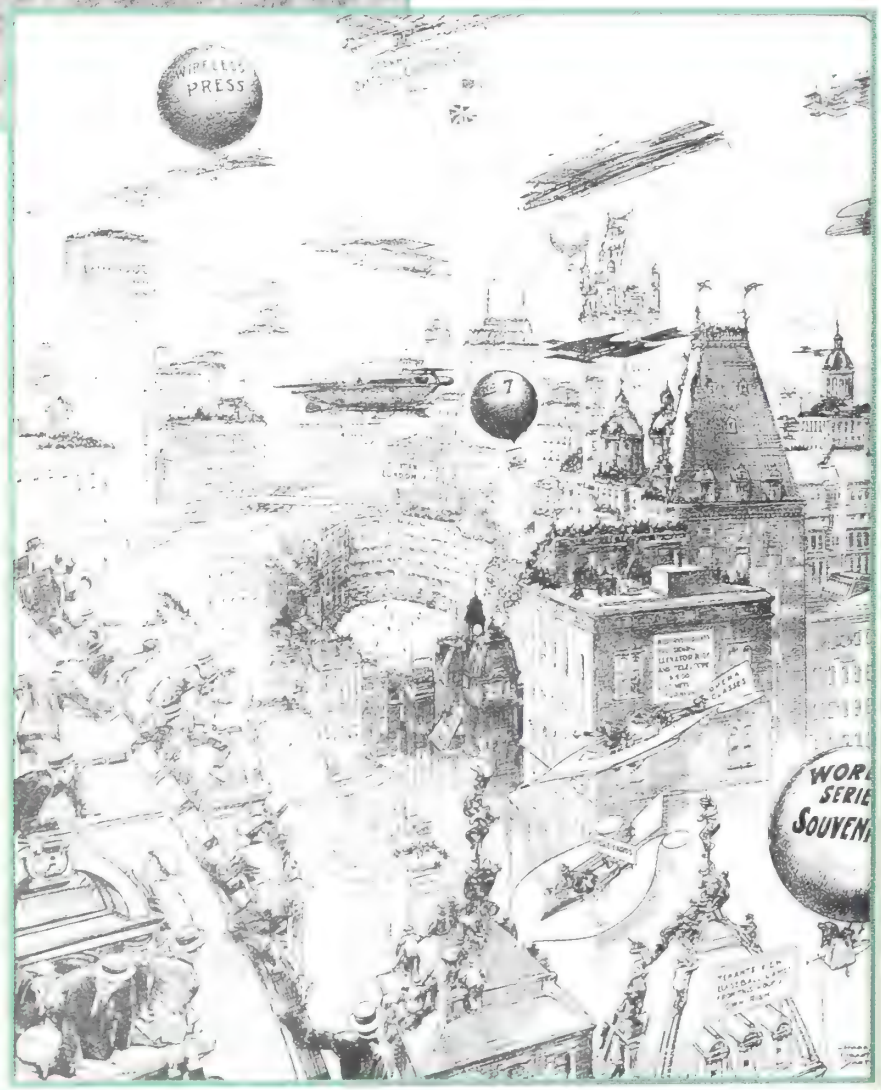
Responding over the last century and a half to an always changing present, America's political cartoonists have sketched their predictions of the future with an ironic awareness of the dangers of unbridled "progress." And yet, being American, they hedged their mockery with the native faith in miraculous invention and new machines: transatlantic symphonies courtesy of the telephone; landscapes despoiled by railroads and advertisements for talcum; horses reduced, by the advent of the automobile, to the size of lapdogs. By the turn of the century, the airship was extolled everywhere as an elegant symbol of American ingenuity, and countless illustrations predicted the manifold uses—as battleship, taxi, billboard, and luxury liner—that it would surely one day serve.

In this spirit, *Harper's Magazine* has arranged a collection of futurist visions from the past—a remembrance of things to come—and has asked several of today's prominent illustrators to try their hand at the fortune-teller's art, to read the signs and portents of our present age and predict how we might live during the next 150 years.



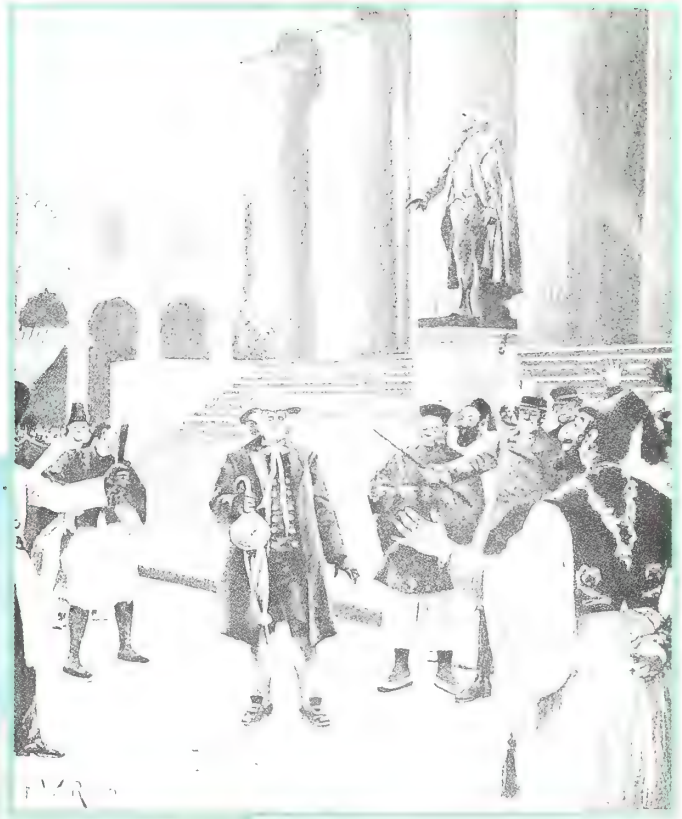
Life magazine was first published in 1883 as a satirical weekly with a focus on "current affairs, morals and manners." It encouraged the artist-as-editorialist and delivered such musings as the [illegible] in 1912, [illegible] in 1923, [illegible] in 1924, [illegible] and [illegible]. Life was sold to Time, Inc. in 1936.

In the fall of 1912 the Boston Red Sox met the New York Giants in the World Series and Life predicted the degree to which baseball mania would overwhelm the city.










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ARNOLD ROTH



ROSS MACDONALD has appeared in Rolling Stone, Vanity Fair, on the Wall Street Journal, [illegible]
Night Live, in the Boston Globe, and in Tommy, as well as [illegible]



STEVE BRODNER

If out of sorts and plagued by warts,
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(1850)





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Engulfed in apathy?
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(2150)



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WHY MARRIAGE?

Matrimony at the millennium offers solace to capitalism

BY JANE SMILEY



I FAMILY DINNER

My guinea-pig child, now twenty-one, was home from her senior year in college for Christmas vacation. This child was not by temperament suited to be the unbuffered firstborn of a literary, freethinking mother and an anxiety-prone father, the child of divorce, joint custody, and stepparenting. Her whole life she was a girl who liked things steady and predictable. Thus it came as a surprise to me when she disclosed her ideal family, the one she aims to have when she is the matriarch. The word she used was "welcoming." Should you want to be in her family, whoever you are, well, she is going to be happy to have you. Her house will have plenty of beds and plenty of dishes and plenty of congenial people sitting around discussing issues like women's health care and the third wave of feminism. I liked it. It sounded quite like the home she has grown up in, of which I have been the matriarch.

The last night before my daughter went back to college, we had another one of those family dinners—you know, me, my boyfriend, his daughter and son by his second wife, my daughters by my second husband, and my seven-year-old son by my third husband. The topic of conversation was how my son came to walk home from school—more than a mile up a steep, winding road on a very warm day. "What did you do when cars went by?" I asked.

"I stopped to the side of the road!" he answered. He was laughing at the success of his exploit. Not only had he been a very bold boy who had accomplished something he had been wanting to do, he had been impressively disobedient. We all laughed, and my boyfriend and I exchanged a look that I found pleased and seduced by that happy family idea, every one safe and well-fed, getting along, taken care of.

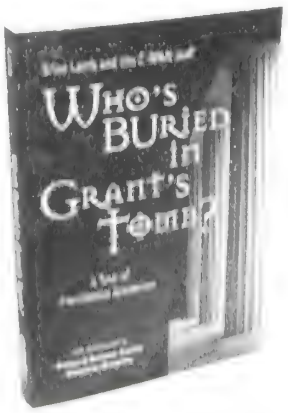
But we are not married, and we have no plans to blend our families. I come to the theory and practice of marriage at the start of the new millennium with a decidedly [illegible] But, I admit, I'm still [illegible] that my child [illegible] get married. I see [illegible] the traditional [illegible] this [illegible] nicety, [illegible] ing to [illegible] have [illegible] benefited [illegible]

Jane Smiley's last novel is Horse Heaven. *Her last article for* Harper's Magazine, *"Say It Ain't So, Huck: Second Thoughts on Mark Twain's Masterpiece," appeared in the January 1996 issue.*

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...ent and be part of the material transaction. I talk to both of them.

II. CHILDREN

I quote my brother-in-law's excellent reputation among the Lancet the free market, for he is an economist and information and middle the lives of consumers in the way that he cares both the economic and individual. If the market indeed the way, then Lancet quite clearly decided that what it does not want is children. A general monogamy, frequent changes of employment and a high degree of mobility. It has decided that, on balance, it is better to offer adults to work rather than to remain at home with the children. It has decided that most children will spend at least part of their early childhood in the care of people outside their families who are hired to care for them, often in institutional settings rather than at home. It has decided that the inherent unreliability of marriage is to be promoted rather than suppressed. It has decided that the individual's attachment hope to society will be less and less mediated through the family and more and more experienced directly. Lancet the free market would say, I should say, or they should say that we should embrace rather than resist what capitalism has decided.

Which is not to say that when, a few years ago, I pulled from the mailbox of my two daughters I wasn't enamored. The choice of women to have presented itself to me as a choice between men and monogamy. And monogamy, I've always known, is the right thing. I married the girl next door, a Midwestern Protestant, and I tried, with varying degrees of success, to be a good husband. I've never made the conscious decision to be faithful to my wife, but I've always known that I'm happy only when I'm married. I've always loved my children and I've always been willing to do anything for them. I would not have known my own life if I hadn't been willing to do anything for them.

My students are not very different from me. They are [illegible] and they have great ...

...ment. Lancet contemplates their ...ental, and the families of their friends, of course, companionate and close and long-lasting. They have a network of children, stepsisters and stepbrothers near their own ages. Some mothers, fathers, second marriages, step-brothers, step-sisters, their mothers' and fathers' second marriages, half brothers, my son. Their stepsiblings have stepsiblings of their own, to which my daughters feel somewhat related. All of the children elect to maintain family ties with one another, ties that bind them more closely to one another than to their various stepparents. My daughters like the looseness of this, in fact, most of the time they like the general looseness of our family and compare it favorably with the tightness, and even unpleasantness, of their friends' traditional families, which seem a little suffocating. Both girls have had crushes on the families of friends, tried in some sense to be in those families, but in the end have found those families a little huddled, a little boring. And I have experienced the input of the stepparents and the stepsiblings as productive and enlightening. What I thought of as mass murder turned out to be freedom—freedom from the particular family pathology that the girls' father and I were monogamously building in our four-bedroom house on that corner lot in that state I now think of as Monogamy Central.

III. MEN

Let me say that there is only one thing we know about men that they feel a tension between monogamy and promiscuity. Let me further say that the balance of that tension is different in different men, and that possibly the balance is inherited, and that it changes as the years go, sometimes from monogamy toward promiscuity and sometimes from promiscuity toward monogamy. If we accept as fact only this one thing about men, then any one man is likely to be more or less likely to be possible, while at the same time a statistician would be a reliable social check upon the chaos of promiscuity. Men themselves

would have a stake in promoting stability for others while trying to find some wiggle room for themselves.

One thing that seems to be evident from history is that marriage as a property relationship is more stable than marriage as a personal relationship. It is not until women emerge from property status that the tension between monogamy and promiscuity is really a problem. It is women with voices and a certain amount of power who force men to choose between possible types of relationships. We can easily imagine a man having a mother, a housekeeper, a wife who has produced his legitimate children, a concubine, a sister, and even a female friend, all living under the same roof. The trouble is, we can't imagine him in America. In America custom requires that the mother and sister live elsewhere and all of the others be boiled into one, the wife. Wives require it, too. When courtship was about joining properties, then it could be short. Now that marriage is about being everything to one another, courtship takes a long time and can break down at any point. It is difficult to find a mate who is equally good at every function, and it is also difficult to know oneself well enough to know which function you care about more than the others. And then, of course, as the marriage project moves through its stages—householding, child rearing, professional success, aging—the functions you once cared about change or evolve. The great lover who can't manage to get a dirty dish into the dishwasher becomes more annoying than exciting, the wonderful friend who is infertile is a figure of tragedy, the terrific mother who harps about responsibility comes to seem like a nag.

And that tension between monogamy and promiscuity remains, now transformed into a dilemma of character. The trouble with serial monogamy, which I define as being faithfully married to one person until you can't stand it anymore, and then being faithfully married to another person who fits the new standard better, is that each transition in the series comes as a personal defeat. Serial infidelity is even worse, a strange combination of victory and defeat every time the husband cheats on his wife, until he is found not only to the moral attractions of monogamy but also to the erotic attractions of promiscuity. Everything he said, every promise he made, every way that he knew himself—all were wrong.



Capitalism doesn't decide between the two simultaneous male drives toward promiscuity and monogamy but promotes both of them frenetically, knowing, like stockbrokers, that there is more money to be made by churning a portfolio than by holding on to it. It is for the men themselves to decide how expensive a great deal of change is, and whether the expense, in the end, is worth it. As late capitalism becomes later capitalism, the pressure toward individual change can only increase, since change generates wealth and circulates it too.

But change also promotes learning and flexibility [illegible] mercatful). Those who learn and do learn often not only [illegible] suit them but also [illegible] value and cherish the [illegible] begin to master the [illegible] sharing, forgiving, taking responsibility. They begin to understand [illegible] relative merits of monogamy and promiscuity seem to forge new modes of relating that transcend the apparent split between the two. Whether these can fit these new modes into marriage remains, however, to be seen.

IV. FIDELITY

[illegible] seems distracted when he or she is. [illegible] friend [illegible] Her husband [illegible] Harvard [illegible]

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their

and

When I

she

ut the paradigm, and

men. The other girlfriend and her central place in the life of the man I loved prevented that, and her own refusal to allow her sexual

of an alternative.

Some men and women have the knack of being so delightfully pre- while in and of itself, whether or not any promises about exclusiveness have been made. There are people in freedom is the very essence their appeal, and those who rth pursuing than the relaship with that delightful person, ship, whatever it entails, the valu-

forced to ponder these ques- about your own freedom and autono- with your friend or spouse when he is present with you as well as your ability to be present with yourself when he is not with you.

One thing I have discovered is uble was that I could feel unassuageable longing for my in my arms, talking right to me. If I nize what was left as love, and me a long time to rec- hen I felt it or saw it. ng married was the educa- in learning not to be oblivious, but instead honest and observant.

than anything

other ideas, other morality, about what love is, what loneliness is, what happiness is, and what commitment is.

V. FEMINISM

It was inevitable that women would rise out of property status. Capitalism wants every consumer, and ultimately distinctions among consumers according to gender, age, geographical location, or ethnic background must break down, as the market inevitably extends itself. The power to sell or buy inevitably carries with it a sense of autonomy and a feeling of freedom, no matter how temporary. Since marriage began as a property relationship, its foundations are challenged by the transformation of the property into personhood. In William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, Leontes' right to kill his wife in a jealous rage is not challenged by law, nor is his right to kill his daughter. He can only be worked on in private, by the nag Paulina, who torments his conscience for sixteen years. Leontes' transformation comes

[illegible] to all [illegible] home in the [illegible] never be [illegible] Hermione [illegible] the recognition that [illegible] sweet and tempestuous [illegible] reconciliation between [illegible] And it is not a coincidence that Perdita, lost and found, is a daughter rather than a son. Shakespeare perfectly understands the confusion of power and property considerations that would surround the figure of a fourteen-year-old female heir presumptive without a brother. Perdita returns as a miracle, as a gift rather than as a possessed female, and Leontes is redeemed.

Personhood and autonomy require the individual freedom to choose for herself, and both the civil rights and feminist movements have been largely about black and women gaining access to the education and capital necessary to do this. This does not mean that each [illegible] such as the Civil War and World War II didn't cause both men and women to wonder whether property relationships were safer after all. But the resistance

[illegible] that [illegible] to [illegible] their [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

What those
"duck-and-cover"
drills never taught us . . .



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foreword by David Brower
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and we have to enhance our value relative to others by offering a scarce talent or skill, or else combine with others to share both the work and the wealth. Feminism has explored these ideas—sisterhood and entrepreneurship—both theoretically and practically.

The obvious course is to combine with men, the fathers of our children, as a way of avoiding the heartbreak of natural culling, but the success of feminism as an outgrowth of the free market requires the reconstitution of the marriage bond so that both men and women benefit from it. At the turn of the millennium, that is where we find ourselves.

VI. SEX

Marriage as a property relationship organized sex very clearly. The transfer of property from one family to another, and then from one generation to another, gave primacy to the reproductive function of sex, making generally accepted status distinctions among all offspring produced by both members of the couple. Reproductive choice is one of the products of free-market capitalism that actually has been as revolutionary as advertised, and undoubtedly could have destroyed marriage as a property relationship all by itself, because the effect of reproductive choice is to promote desire as an end, and endless desire as the ultimate goal.

More optimistic philosophers of capitalism view desire as a form of greed, perhaps the highest form of greed, and therefore the most profitable. Pessimistic philosophers of capitalism have other ideas: a form of infantilism (Freud), a biological necessity, a weakness, a failure of will. People who get married tend to view it as a promise. The way someone defines desire determines its result. Defining it as hunger for something wanting, for example, dictates that it must be sated, especially in marriage, the best one can hope for is that tricks and brief deprivations will put off satiation temporarily. Some Hollywood movies, such as *Casablanca*, depict it as a brief consummation preceded and followed by years of deprivation: the briefer the consummation, the more total the deprivation, the more perfect the experience of desire. Humphrey Bogart's last line to Claude Rains is spoken with relief: romantic deprivation is exactly what he has wanted all along. The alternative scenario, as in, for example, *The Big Sleep*, is that the couple will experience danger and potential deprivation, and their level of desire will thereby be enhanced beyond the power of permanent commitment to drain it off completely. The logical end of this line of thinking is *Bonnie and Clyde* or *Natural Born Killers*, the rapid alternation of sex and the threat of death climaxing in a shootout or the electric chair.

In fact, for market capitalism, sex is like everything else—something to want when you don't have it and to not want when you do have it. This poses a problem for marriage based on personal relationship, especially since the fluctuating desires of two people need to be taken into account, and it is easy for either or both parties to interpret strong desire as pressing need.

The solution to the difficulties of marital sex offered by free-market capitalism is a lifetime of courtship, which, like all courtship, carries a high degree of cruelty. Not long ago I was at the beauty parlor, eavesdropping on a seventy-year-old woman who, when the hairdresser asked if she had a boyfriend, said, "Don't you know? At my age they say, 'If he's younger than you, he's after your purse, if he's older than you, he's after a nurse.'" We all laughed, because we ruefully agreed. And yet courtship after fifty is illuminating in several ways. One of these grows out of the fact that the path from erection to ejaculation is neither as short nor as direct as it once was, thereby inviting both partners, but especially the man, to explore other, some cultures would say higher, modes of pleasure. Another grows out of the uncoupling of roles—neither partner is in the throes of choosing a career, defining an identity, or deciding whether and how to have children; the hopes and fears that impinge upon sexuality in

one's twenties and thirties have become regrets or achievements, but at any rate are decided. Sexuality itself is less mysterious, more available for experimentation. Does endless desire result from relaxation?

Comedian Chris Rock has said, "A man is only as faithful as his options," and to that, greed, serial monogamy, and promiscuity would say, "Amen!" Lifetime courtship is an option, though, not a requirement. Marital sex after fifty presents the same opportunities as extramarital sex, if the partners can deflect the definitions of desire that the market offers and shuck off perceived injuries of their common past.

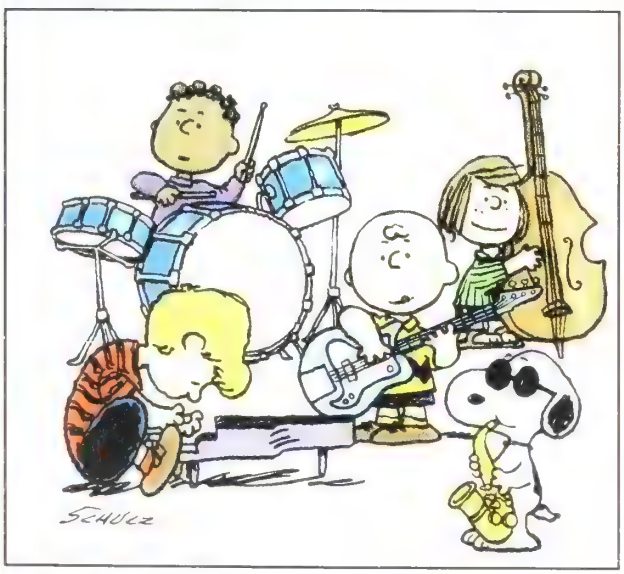
VII. INTIMACY

We marry to make ourselves happy. In this we have the approval of both free-market capitalism and the signers of the Declaration of Independence, who chose "the pursuit of happiness" rather than "property" as the appropriate corollary to life and liberty. Nevertheless, when we marry we mostly don't know what will make us happy. Happiness is a multiple-choice test: "steady companionship" "lots of stuff" "a nice place to live" "children? plenty of sex? good health? freedom to do what we want? The free market offers one suggestion after another, and serial monogamy as well as serial infidelity can be seen as a method of sampling all the wares, all the theories about happiness. Usually, once most of the goods have been sampled and found wanting, we try the services of psychotherapy, self-improvement, creative self-expression—and, to some extent, these seem to work better.

Capitalism has ordained diversity. Just as the starling and the Japanese beetle and syphilis and AIDS have spread from their original habitats, so, too, have we been given a wide choice of potential mates. I was Protestant-agnostic from St. Louis. My first husband was Irish-Catholic from Wyoming. My second husband was Hungarian-Catholic from the Bronx. My third husband was Nordic-Baptist from Iowa. In every case, the things we knew uncon- seriously about [illegible] complex- [illegible] tured and what [illegible] physical signals meant sometimes agreed and sometimes [illegible]. We often found ourselves [illegible] territory, misinterpreting [illegible] communicating, and feeling very alone. Add to this the inherent communication differences between men and women, and intimacy seems like an unlikely outcome. The preference of many of our parents, stated years ago, that we marry within our faith and within our neighborhood, seems, in retrospect, a practical alternative.

The solution that capitalism offers is bargaining, and, indeed, we are often advised to become good negotiators in our relationships, that is, to communicate specifically and explicitly, to be fair in divvying up responsibilities, and to understand that relationships are like contracts. Bargaining offers some advantages compared with the hierarchy of a property arrangement. For one thing, a bargain implies equality between the bargainers. For another, it invites the investigation and expression of things that might otherwise

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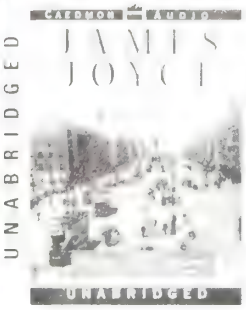
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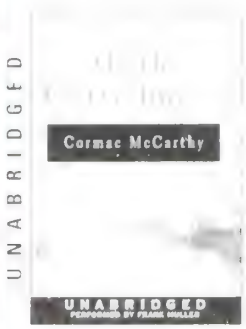
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to construct. For example, what constitutes a normal family. But bargaining also implies a zero-sum situation—that domestic life is a life of limits and real or potential deprivation. Bargaining in the home shares the limitations of bargaining in the marketplace. Advantage can be gained by being dishonest or secretive or by withholding a desired object. Bargaining and negotiation refine the letter of the agreement, encouraging the temptation to catch the other partner out in reneging on the agreement, and it also rewards the partners for soliciting third parties in deciding whether the agreement has been violated. A bargain can never truly be fair, and so it focuses the minds of the bargainers on inequities and betrayals.

The first requirement of intimacy is honesty. Honesty between spouses is supremely difficult unless each spouse feels him- or herself to be complete, because bargaining is about negotiating needs; that is, compensations for incompleteness. If the only reason to marry is to be happy, and happiness can result only from intimacy, then serial monogamy is the natural result of a strategy of bargaining as a way of divvying up marital responsibilities.

Codependency is an interesting late-capitalist pathology that illuminates both intimacy and bargaining. The codependent is said to be someone who gives up an explicit bargain in favor of an implicit bargain. Instead of you taking care of me and me taking care of the children, say, you bringing home the money and me taking care of the house, our bargain is, allegedly, that you act like my drunken father and I feel a sense of familiarity. Except that the codependent partners often don't consciously feel that such is the bargain they have made. Rather, they feel that they have committed themselves to each other, but problems—addiction, finance, illness, and temperament have made the commitment a troubled one. The instinct of the couple is to try harder to honor their commitments, but their psychological advisers view this effort as their problem. If bargaining is the model, then they are right—good bargaining always strives for explicitness and fairness. If intimacy is the model, then something else is going on. Psychological professionals always say that codependents are avoiding intimacy, but, in fact, the partners actually have achieved a high level of intimacy, because they have confronted the inconveniences of each other and have chosen to accept them, at least intermittently, rather than avoid them. The problem is not intimacy, per se, but each partner's sense of self. If the depredations of each partner had no negative effect upon the couple's circumstances or upon the other partner's feelings of strength, happiness, and well-being, then the relationship would not be pathological but potentially transformative, rather like what happens when one spouse contracts a serious illness that puts both spouses to the test and brings them to new and deeper levels of intimacy.

The first, last, and most important requirement of recovery from addiction is absolute honesty, the first, last, and most important requirement of intimacy, but, in the pantheon of self-serving virtues required by free-market capitalism, it is nowhere to be found.

VIII. MONEY

Divorce laws in the state of California, where I live, are absolute. Whatever property accrues to the partners in a marriage accrues to both and shall be divided equally by both, no matter who accrued it, who left, who broke the contract. The moral construction of the marriage bond has no legal weight, and very little bargaining is allowed. Perhaps these laws were intended to retard marital breakdown. In a model where the husband accrues the money, then discards the wife and children for a younger woman, possibly he might be given pause by the idea that it's cheaper to keep her. If the model is different and, for example, the money was accrued by the wife, who bore the children and kept to the contract but the husband left her anyway for a

younger woman, giving rise to the innocent drive toward premarriage, when the couple meet the immediate lodging of the property. In such a case, the departing male has no reason to maintain the marriage and every reason to leave it. He who came in with nothing leaves with quite a bit, an excellent deal and a nice bit of income redistribution. In the divorce culture, laws like those in the state of California serve as a disincentive to marriage, especially between people of disparate incomes. Serial monogamy turns out to be a way periodically to halve your assets.

The free market, especially in the last thirty years, has decreed that disparate incomes shall be the norm. Those who have also have lawyers advising them on how to protect what they have against the intimate enemy, the potential future spouse, using the family trust, the prenuptial agreement. When I told my lawyer that my boyfriend was going to remodel my house, she advised me to get a strict estimate and regular billings, then to keep a record of the checks I paid him with so that if we broke up he couldn't claim equity in the house and force me to sell it. In California, apparently, any type of affectional relationship is dangerous. Of course, the logical end to all of this is: every man a monad, and every woman, too.

And yet, as the baby-boom generation ages, the problem that faces Social Security faces individuals and families too. Who provides? When marriage was a property relationship and assets were concentrated in the hands of patriarchs, the answer was clear. In our day, with assets circulating at an accelerated pace through an economy more and more intrusive, customs regulating who pays and who is paid for have little time to take hold, while the selfishness and greed that are the default options of the system gain currency, as they did all through the 1980s.

Who pays for the children? Who pays for the men and women without defined benefit pension plans, IRAs, and Keogh plans? Who pays for the unlucky and the unwise? Greed and selfishness always say, not me!

IX. WHY ARE YOU MARRIED?

I know quite a few people who support children not their own.

I know one person who supports children not even belonging to their spouse's mate. What this would look like in economic and ecological terms is unimaginable, and is explained only by invoking love or the common good. And free-market capitalism is a poor teacher when it comes to understanding love or the common good. Traditional marriage in a family, like a tribe, have much more to say than self-interest does on these topics. Where blood is mediated by divorce, stepparents, stepchildren, and stepcousins, it does tend to be thicker than water, in accordance with the sociobiological model.

But most of us at the start of the millennium live in the fluid middle ground between the solitary *Homo economicus* protecting his assets and the tribe that uses degrees of blood kinship to define who is one of us and who is not. Our most important relationships are closer, more than those with whom we feel an affinity, and for such relationships the free-market capitalism metric is irrelevant to the questions about who provides, what constitutes a commitment or an obligation or a responsibility, even what constitutes a relationship. The free market has shown us how our lives will look but not us what particular things are truly lived.

If we return to *Othello*, I think we see that Iago's original motive is the sin of jealousy, that is, the effort trying to corner the market on another person's inner life. The history of speculation shows us that trying to corner the market is always an act of hubris that leads to disaster. The flow of other feelings, not unlike the flow of particular assets through the economy. Stopping the flow or attempting to contain it is a misapprehension of what feelings and assets are, which is dynamic, without meaning or value in themselves but gaining meaning and value from their relationship to other feelings, other assets. Love, sin, and punishment are not static

[illegible]

be exploited.

If marriage or partnership is for [illegible] and [illegible] to [illegible] that [illegible] others. These are not bargaining chips; when they are used that way they [illegible] responsibility, kindness, and honesty [illegible] passionate, tender, patient, responsible, kind, and honest man or woman, no matter [illegible] and [illegible] responsibility, kindness, and honesty [illegible] our communities, and with the larg[illegible]

■

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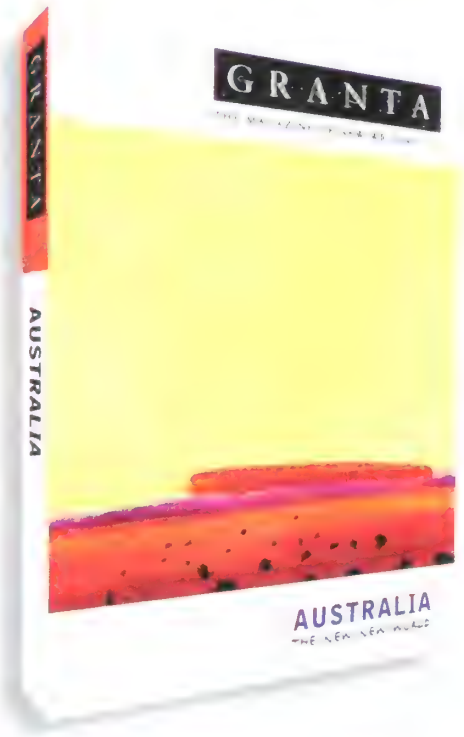
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LAST RITES

When the existential becomes the retail

BY THOMAS LYNCH

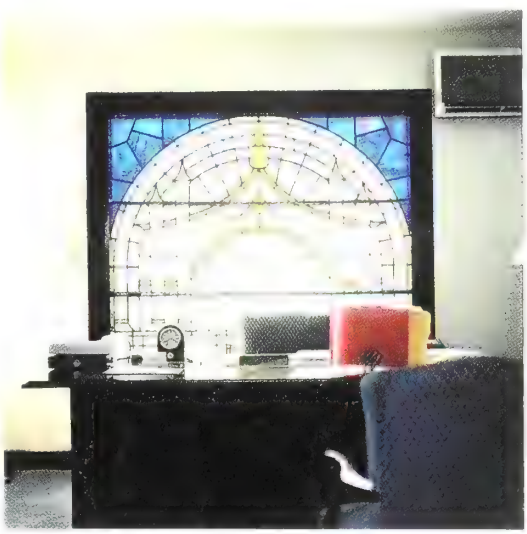
Katharine, we die

The line still startles with its stark economy. It is a line from a poem by a man who, like most poets, could be said to be "internationally ignored." The poem in which this line occurs is called "For Katharine, 1952–1961," which appears in *New & Selected Poems* by Conrad Hilberry. It is a brief, heartbreaking, life-affirming poem—a grieving father trying to explain death to his daughter ten years after she has died. And, measured against the fat lines of Walt Whitman or Marianne Moore, this one is tiny: three words only, four syllables, five if you say it slowly; fourteen letters, a comma, and a full stop. One short line of a short poem in a short book published by a respectable university press some years ago and then largely forgotten. A line that, nonetheless, contains fully half of all the Existential Truths.

Listen up: *We die!* The other half echoes in the utterance of the first, of course: *We live!* Against one or both of these facts all of the other facts of life and death are shaped and reshaped so that *morior* (more so than *cogito*), *ergo sum* is primal among the proofs of our being. *I die, therefore I am.*

I am always trying to imagine the particulars—that first Neanderthal widow waking to the dead lump of her man, somewhere in the Urals or the Apennines, one gray morning forty or fifty thousand years ago. His body has about it a stillness that she has not seen in him before. He is dumbstruck, unresponsive in ways that worry her. Changed utterly.

Did she wait until he began to smell?





Hours in warm weather, maybe. Days in winter. Or did she know a dead [illegible] when she saw it, seeing in him [illegible] she'd seen before in other [illegible] ing, breathing things? Either [illegible] et or later she knew [illegible] would have to be [illegible] she [illegible] the cave to him [illegible] could dig a hole, [illegible] have him over the hillside [illegible] swamp

Thomas Lynch is a funeral director in Milford, Michigan. His most recent collection of poems is Still Life in Milford. Bodies in Motion and at Rest *will be published this month by W. W. Norton.*





I've been watching these changes from the corner of East Street and Liberty Boulevard in a small town in the Midwest where I've been the undertaker for the better part of twenty years. It's a family's work. My brothers and sisters and I grew up washing cars and carting flowers, swinging the doors and greeting the mourners. I had to entertain my friends and classmates working for our father. Some of us went to mortuary school and learned to embalm. Others studied liberal arts, accountancy, liberal arts. As more and more of us chose funeral service as a way of life, the enterprise expanded. There are four funeral homes now that bear the family name in different suburban locations. Of my parents' nine children, all but two work in one of these places.

My town is typical: postindustrial, postmodern, unabashedly post-Christian. Main Street, Cowskill's newspaper, a population that for the most part, agrees this is a great place to raise children. We have, along with

mention. And I handle it with more or less the same enthusiasm as the new fire engine and family cars, our newly decorated lounge with the kitchen and the parlor, or our sponsorship of the church calendars and Little League uniforms; less to do with our price list or casket selection, our parking lot improvement loans and everything to do with the fact that when they call we answer. No voice mail or automated answering system, no menu of options, no pound keys to push. Just someone listening, who either can help or will take down particulars and drive out in the dark when there is trouble. It's the [illegible] that matters in the end.

While most Main Streets across the country [illegible] lawyers and doctors—were consolidating and [illegible] computer systems and corporate

humor in the media. [illegible] pabilities. "They're all crooks," the [illegible]

neral homes across [illegible] cent are still family-owned enterprises that have spent [illegible] years in their communities building their reputations, [illegible] percent of their total income [illegible] goodwill and the [illegible] family name. Maybe this [illegible] the [illegible] the damaged or unused portion for replacement. Once broken, a funeral is hard to fix, and we want to know who is accountable to us. For these and other reasons, the funeral remains a unique enterprise that resists standardization, classification, downsizing, convenience, efficiencies, and most other marketing strategies. It relies more on trust, personal attention, and accountability.

[illegible] you won't find in your dentist's [illegible] find that two topics domin[illegible]

ng sold.

mini-mall

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McBurger and the

new synergies between supply
istribution and retail outlets.

Christian Funeral Ser-
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details. The Church,

ist hurrah expected be-

nual deaths in the United States will
million these

A bull market has funded the ac-
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een claiming future market
share. Independent funeral direc-
ghtened that someone will
have been selling when some
pre-need sales programs. They mort-
gage their brick and mortar to fund
telemarketing schemes to fight tele-
marketing schemes, junk mail to
to the punch. Their trade ass
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Arre
ete locally with a multi
ation, jumping through
the FTC, and watching the perenni-
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and more second- and third-genera-
independent funeral h
nd call it a day.
Their communities are staked out,
ns with someone they
will likely never see again, who
mpany with so many
r the pre-need trade, folks can't

ant to pay for their funerals in ad
ance. But line up any hundred ordi
ary citizens in a mall, say, or a
athedral or a stadium, and ask what
hey want for their next birthday,
ew will say a funeral. The soft mar-
et in funeral futures might be con-
nected to the fact that you have to
e dead to take delivery. This is why
he sell has to be such a hard one.
Ready or not, the transaction with
our name and dates on it—the 18-
auge Batesville with the changeable
ardware, the grave or columbarium
pace, the Wilbert vault or Eterna-
rn, Rock of Ages and perpetual
are—is out there looking for you
nd your Visa or MasterCard.

This is not evil. It is the new
American Way: to merge and ac-
quire, to buy and sell. The phone
ompanies and churches and auto-
nobile companies are doing it. Big-
er is better. Global's the rage. And,
t is argued, there is nothing inher-
ntly wrong with "conglomerate"
wnership, nor is there anything es-
ecially noble about "independent"
wnership. And, it is true, there are
loppy independent operators and ex-
mplary conglomerate ones. In prac-
ice, however, they are organized
round essentially different princi-
les. The publicly traded corporate
nterprise is accountable to the inter-
national headquarters, the sales quo-
a, and the stockholder, while the in-
dependent is accountable to the local
consumer, including, very often, the
local loan officer. The privately
wned firm cannot attribute its prices
o some distant "home office" or the
district manager." It cannot blame
hortfalls in service on "company
olicy." The privately owned firm
nust make up in local public trust
what it lacks in multinational corpo-
ate cover. For independents, market
hare—present and future—is guar-
nteed by reputation; they count on
he name on the sign. Conglomerates
count on stock prices and the money
n the bank. This is why the hard-sell
preselling of funerals has increased in
direct proportion to consolidation
within funeral service.

The pre-*arrangement* of funerals is
s old as the pyramids; pre-*funding*,
s old as the money stuffed in the
mattress. But pre*selling*—the junk-

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ge divorce of their mother and fa
her, the misbehavior of our political
aders, how love hurts and life isn't
air. I've done cat pools and bag
nches and overwhelming questions,
ittle League and P.T.A. difficult
oices and the facts of life. Some-
mes it got really heavy. Sometimes
had to tell them I didn't know.

And bearing these burdens of love
nd grief has made me feel alive, in-
olved, evolved, in ways I never
ought I would be, it's made me feel
eeded and necessary and part of the
mily. It has made me feel "called"
o be a parent. And if it has left me
ald and nearly broke and fairly be-
ildered, it has likewise left me won-
rous, blessed, and thankful. After
verything, being their father has
rought more meaning to my life
han any other thing I've ever done
r been.

And when I die, the burden of
urning me or burning me or blasting
ne into space should be theirs to
lear. My funeral will belong to
hem, and they will be paying for it
motionally, financially, actually.
ince they have to live with the de-
isions, why shouldn't they make
hem? If I've done my job, then
hey'll know what to do. If the bur-
len of my death, borne honorably,
nakes them feel as capable as bear-
ng the sweet burden of their births
as made me feel, I can do them the
avor of leaving well enough alone.

When I tell the disembodied one
n the other end of the line these
hings, she goes silent. It is not
n the script. She hangs up. We re-
turn to what's left of our
lives.

THE FUNERAL IN AMERICA
nce an intergenerational transac-
ion, is now becoming a narcissistic
ne. Instead of serving the living by
aring for the dead, it is sold to the
ving to be cashed in when the liv-
ng are dead. More and more we are
nistaking a good deal on a casket for
good funeral, as if a good life-insur-
nce policy were the Good Life.

While death-care moguls and
leath-care watchdogs work to frame
funeral as only the sum of its
arts—a thing to be marketed like
olan heat, sold like a retirement
plan, and delivered like a bulky
home appliance—generations raised
with an appetite and aptitude for
metaphor, symbol, and icon will not
take leave of their dead without the
spiritual, religious, and interpersonal
comforts of ritual. If life is made easy
by technology, it is made meaningful
by observance of its rites of passage:
the baptisms and marriages and fu-
nerals, those rich and deliberate ac-
tions by which we are pronounced
alive, in love, gone but not forgotten.

If the men of my generation would
not sit out in the waiting room fum-
bling with cigars waiting for some
health-care professional to turn
them into fathers; if these men in-
sisted on seeing for themselves, on
being there, if these men, in search
of meaning, brought us birthing
rooms and home births and dads in
the delivery room telling their wives
to "breathe, honey, breathe", and if
the women of my generation, unwill-
ing to have their mothers and fathers
dying in "intensive care" surrounded
by a technology and a parlance that
kept the dying distant from the
people who "really cared," brought
us hospice and home deaths and the
hands-on care of the dying by their
own; how long will these men and
women sit still while some death-
care professional pre-arranges their
parents' disappearance on the cheap?
Boomers know the difference be-
tween costs and values. They know
that a good price on a bad deal is no
bargain. They know the difference
between fashion and fundamentals.
And they will reaffirm their funda-
mental rights and obligations to care
for their dead.

We occupy a difficult space in the
history of obsequies. For many, the
traditional religious metaphors have
lost their meaning. Likewise ethnic,
cultural, and geographic communi-
ties, undone by diversity, mobility,
and globalization, have not filled the
ceremonial vacuum. In the market-
place, Mittordized and Wal-Mart-
ized, both purveyors and critics have
adopted the same limited vocabu-
lary. When more and more of us
keep asking what is next, we keep
getting more and more detail on
what it's going to cost. One group ar-
gues that a good funeral costs

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"more." Another argues that a good funeral costs "less." Both try to measure the value by the costs. Both mistake the numbers, more or less, for comfort.

However much or little the McFuneral or the McNothing-at-All costs, if neither meets the needs of those who mourn, maybe we should look for answers elsewhere. If the sad fact of our mortality leaves us desperate for advance planning of casket choices and comprehensive price information, we are alive at the right time, for more than we ever needed to know is available from the corner mortuary or caskets.com. But if the dying of the ones we love, and the prospect of our own death, leaves us wounded and full of wonder, little in the marketplace will make much sense to us.

The last year of the last century of the last millennium was not a good one for the McFuneral crowd. The Main Street consumer, the Wall Street investor and the mainstream press all seem to have voted in their various ways against globalization in the mortuary trades. Maybe Mission Control shouldn't be in Houston. Maybe the Home Office should be closer to home. The Loewen Group is belly-up, trading at under a dollar, selling what assets it can at a loss. SCI's stock has fallen from the forties to the single digits in the past year. They blame less flu, among other things. A portfolio of "death-care" stocks (SRV, STEI, LWN, CSV) is down more than 80 percent since October of 1998. The New York City Department of Consumer Affairs has urged the state's attorney general to prevent further acquisitions by SCI in that city. Lawsuits against SCI have been filed by disgruntled investors, outraged families, former employees, and the estate of Texas's former chief funeral regulator, Elsie May, who claims that she was given her walking papers for investigating SCI on reports of unlicensed personnel embalming bodies. (Of course, no one wants to connect the dots between Mrs. May's dismissal and SCI's payment of $25,000 for a speech to the International Cemetery and Funeral Association, or donating $100,000 to his presidential library, or helping George Jr. with his political aspirations.)

A funeral is not a great investment, it is a sad moment in a family's history. It is not a hedge against inflation; it is a rite of passage. It is not a bargain; it is an effort to make sense of our mortality. It has less to do with actuarial profits than with actual losses. It is not an exercise in salesmanship; it is an exercise in humanity. Both the "death-care" consumer and the "death-care" conglomerates ignore such distinctions at their peril.

If poets phoned in the middle of dinner to sell us dactyls and pentameters instead of caskets or cremation deals, perhaps death and remembrance would be more meaningful. Perhaps this life's glorious and sorrowful mysteries are better served by metaphor than by marketing schemes. For the unspeakable sadnesses and their related joys, a good poem, like a good funeral, makes the most sense when we need it most. Maybe something by Conrad Hilberry, or something from William Carlos Williams, the late good doctor who wrote in "Tract," "I will teach you my townspeople/how to perform a funeral," or something by Michael Hefferman, say, from whose sestina "Last Famous Words" these yet-to-be-famous last words are taken:

Sometimes I have to laugh: the more you wait,
the more you end up wishing you could up
and have a look at what will happen next.
Where did it ever get you, from the start,
the time or two you said you'd wait and see,
when all you really wanted was to drink

it all in, all of it, in one long drink
that would relieve you of the need to wait
for the Right Moment. A man's time is up
in seconds, this quick world. As for the next,
I think I have a theory just to start
to notice how you can't move, think or see . . .

Not long after which, by all accounts, we die. ■

A LIFE IN THE MAZE

Tim Hilton's new book on John Ruskin completes the two-volume biography of a Victorian giant

BY GUY DAVENPORT

Discussed in this essay:

John Ruskin: The Later Years. By Tim Hilton. Yale University Press. 656 pages. $35.



A HUNDRED YEARS AGO THIS eighty-year-old John Ruskin died at Brantwood, his home on the shores of Coniston Water in Lancashire, the Lake District made famous by Wordsworth and Coleridge. For ten dark years he had been out of his right mind, only intermittently recognizing his cousin Joan Severn, a long-suffering woman who had been adopted by the Ruskin family thirty-six years before to nurse Ruskin's ailing mother. In 1871 Joan Agnew, as she then was, had married the son of the Liverpool Sev-

[illegible]

[illegible] Ruskin had met people seem on a visit to Rome in 1841, Ruskin, according to Severn, and George Richmond descending. Richmond had close friendship of William Blake.

Ruskin's life was like that fortunate Henry James's. As a child he had been Wordsworth's neighbor in the Lake District and had met Coleridge, Southey, Procter, Poerio. He gained friends at the highest and lowest levels of society, a maze of unexpected turns, a labyrinth (or *crinkle-crankle*, the Chinese maze and Borges-like [illegible] passages and obstructing dead ends. In mid-1871 and 1884, children of this [illegible] series of monthly letters addressed to the "labourers of Great Britain." [illegible] the like. Hercules' club, [illegible] like Hercules' club, [illegible] like the [illegible] lines, [illegible] like lights in the dark. [illegible] nature, the heart, the [illegible] means "luck" and is, Ruskin said, the "honeycomb" of the [illegible] and "fortitude."

When the club-bearing Theseus ventured into the Cretan labyrinth to the monstrous Minotaur, he [illegible] ball of thread, [illegible] and

[illegible] Ruskin's life [illegible] Ruskin's life [illegible] explored in the labyrinth [illegible] Hill, the Lake District [illegible] England [illegible] Hero [illegible] thought acorn cups and snail shells [illegible]

[illegible] Ruskin [illegible] He was taken around England [illegible] Greek and Latin, Gothic architecture, [illegible] and played with her in the Hampton

[illegible] Rosetti [illegible] Effie Gray [illegible] Millais [illegible] Effie [illegible] Millais [illegible] Effie [illegible] Millais [illegible] Effie

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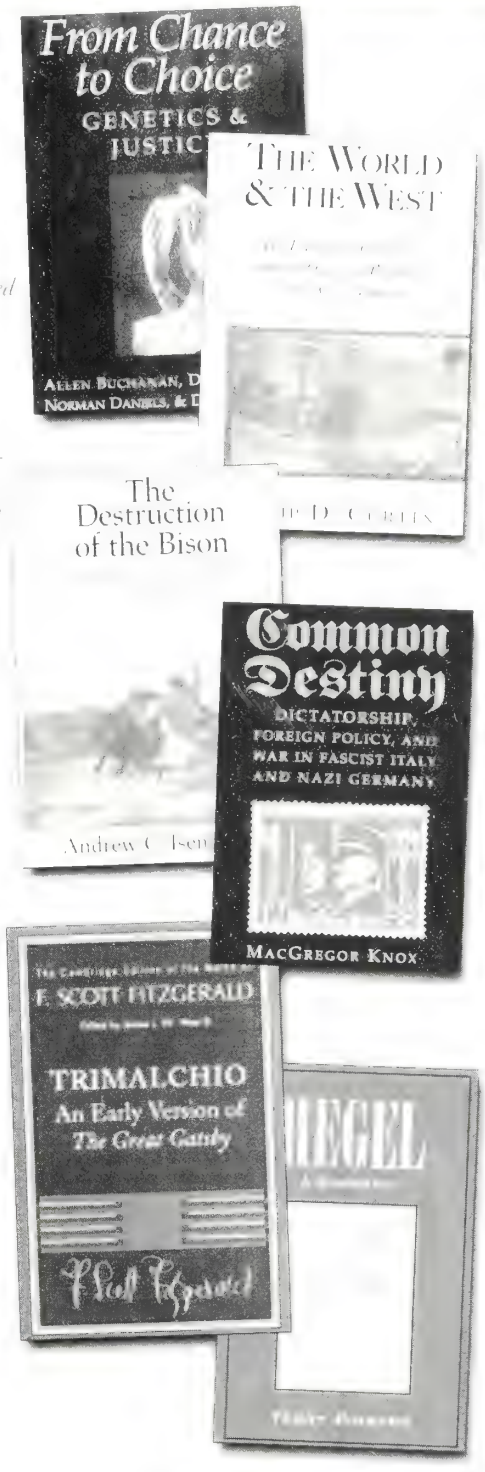
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everybody: Prince Leopold and Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Rosa Bonheur and Charles Eliot Norton, Carlyle and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. He loved visiting girls' schools. He loved rowing and mountain climbing. If there was a subject he were not knowledgeable about, Hilton hasn't found it.

Ruskin relaxed with Euclid (in Greek) all his life. He built scaffolds in Italian churches and climbed them to inspect frescoes that hadn't been seen close up for centuries. He collected manuscripts and books, maps and paintings. He endowed and built museums. (At one time I thought I knew the range of Ruskin's interests, only to be surprised by an exhibit, at the Ashmolean in Oxford, of archaic Greek sculpture of the kind that became appreciated after World War I, when Gaudier-Brzeska, Brancusi, and Modigliani made us aware of its severe, primitive beauty. Ruskin had got there first, bought it Lord knows where, and given it to the museum, to be appreciated when the world's eyes caught up with his.)

It took a while for the world to catch up with Ruskin's discoveries. He recognized, for example, the Countess of Pembroke's and her brother Sir Philip Sidney's metrical translation of the *Psalms* (each psalm in a different meter) for the splendid work it is, "the most beautiful book in English," forgotten and critically neglected, and republished it. His familiarity with Dante was, for the time, daring and unusual, as was his love of Chaucer.

A story of Edith Wharton's, "False Dawn" (1924), nicely illustrates Ruskin's aesthetic pioneering. The story is about an old and wealthy New York family that sends its scion abroad to buy Old European Art as the basis for a museum. In Switzerland he meets up with Ruskin at an inn, is captivated by his talk, and is advised to collect not Baroque but Trecento and Quattrocento Italian paintings. So he returns to New York with Crivellis, Carpaccios, and Giottos. His father is horrified. The newspapers are satirical. The paintings are hidden in an attic for two generations, until a dealer is shown them and they sell for millions, a Piero della Francesca returning to Europe, others going to collections. Impressionism is the story's true subject, but a list of advisers to the [illegible] includes Ruskin.

Worse luck, he falls in with this nobody, John Ruskin.

RUSKIN'S INFLUENCE on his contemporaries was pervasive. Proust worshiped him and translated two of his books, *The Bible of Amiens* (with his mother's help) and *Sesame and Lilies*. The presence of Ruskin in the Modernist movement is evident in the similarity of Pound's *Cantos* to *Fors Clavigera*—their labyrinthine twists and turns, their concern with economic systems that benefit from frequent wars, their interest in Venetian history and the Italian Quattrocento in architecture, poetry, and politics.

Beatrix Potter recorded in her diary seeing Ruskin at the Royal Academy. He was showing some friends around, commenting on the paintings. Seeing Ruskin in public was a jolly surprise, but what fascinated her artist's eye was that Ruskin's trouser leg was caught in the top of his boot and that he was surreptitiously trying to shake it loose. Kafka, too, would have noticed Ruskin's plight. It is a detail that exposes the protocol of biography, which must decide what's relevant and what isn't. The life of a person born 180 years ago was lived in a world wholly different from our own. We no longer respond to some of the most important things in Ruskin's life; his drawing, for instance. He founded a school of drawing at Oxford. He drew all of his life, taught drawing (at Working Men's College in London, as well as by correspondence for many years), wrote about drawing, breathed drawing. Hilton keeps us aware of this, but I wonder if, in an age when drawing is something artists are ashamed of and masterful draftsmen like Norman Rockwell and Paul Cadmus are considered despicable, this attention won't prove invisible.

Then there's Ruskin's world. His Venice, every stone of which he knew the history of, may as well be a different place than the one backpackers look in on. Our Venice is another Italian city; Ruskin's was another world. He traveled in a comfortable carriage, like Montaigne in his day. He stopped to draw wildflowers, clouds, rivers.

In all of Ruskin's travels there is an urgency—not like ours, to see notable places before we die or are too old to trav-

, but to see them while they yet ex-
t, to see Venice before it sank into
he sea, before Austrian shells destroyed
nore of San Marco, before fire and
arthquake and renovation had their way.
le had a prophetic sense that the dark-
ning of European skies by industrial
noke portended some disaster. He
ages in *Fors* at the burning of the Tu-
eries Palace in 1871. Within a few
ears of his death the Germans burned
he medieval library at Louvain and
German shells began to hit the cathe-
ral at Amiens, about which he had
ritten his most fervent study of Goth-
architecture. Seventy French cathe-
rals were blown to rubble by German
rtillery in the First World War.

WHEN SIR EDWARD T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn brought out their *Works of John Ruskin* between 1903 nd 1912 (thirty-nine volumes), a mas-erfully edited and annotated work, Ruskin's popularity was in sharp de-line. In his lifetime he had attracted ll manner of idealists, from a bottle-ork-cutter who belonged to the Guild of St. George, to Prince Leopold, who ttended his Oxford lectures. We need nly look at his centrality to Henry Adams's *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* 1904), at the romantic Socialism of William Morris and Oscar Wilde, at Adrian Stokes's *Stones of Rimini*, at Pound's early *Cantos*. We need a study of Ruskin's *ravissement*. Rodin's study of French cathedrals, Charles Sheeler's photographs of Chartres, Proust's preface to his translation of *Sesame and Lilies* (1905), three lectures on the availability of culture to everybody, in libraries ("kings' treasuries") and nature ("queens' gardens"). It can be demonstrated that the Arts and Crafts Movement that spread across Europe and the United States was largely inspired by Ruskin, and that his medievalism and championing of organic design flowered in Art Nouveau (the first international style since the twelfth century). One might even argue that this century's Modernism, whose theories were incubated at the Bauhaus and in Moscow—Art Nouveau with the lines straightened—comes out of Ruskin and Morris.

As finely textured and interesting as Hilton's biography is—as interesting

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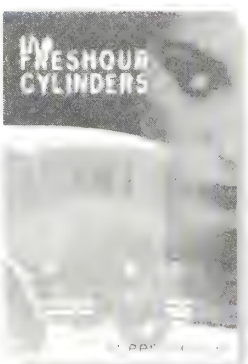
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wooden piles driven into sand. Its ornaments bespeak the fact that the Italians who poured into Italy in the early centuries of the first millennium came on horses. Invaders from central Asia had trained these fur-clad, long-bearded Huns and Goths. The city's name itself recalls the people mentioned in the seventh century by the Greek poet Venetus the Venetian, who bred long-maned horses to be untrue to girls. Their knack for wandering became a Venetian talent. A Venetian merchant named for the evangelist who lies entombed in the chapel of the Ducal Palace, Mark, and for the wandering missionary, Paul—Marco Polo in the local dialect—is the first European to visit China. Its trade was the source of Venice's wealth. Its navy defended the Dalmatian coast for trusts. Its people became rich, as Shakespeare knew, beyond all imagining. They ate not with their fingers, like Queen Elizabeth, but with forks. Their warehouses were laden with silk, spices, weapons, Egyptian cotton, Sicilian wheat, silver, and gold. After 1450 they printed the world's most beautiful books, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. It was this perfection of civilization that Ruskin studied in fine detail. Its energy had lasted for well over a thousand years, always perilously and always brilliantly, holding off Turks, mainland Italians, enemies from over the Alps. When Ruskin first saw Venice, [illegible] painted by Tiepolo hung in shreds inside the Ducal Palace (which had been hit by Austrian artillery) and the great wise pentecrum.

Ruskin's Newdigate Prize poem at Oxford had been about Romantic ruins (those at Salsette and Elephanta in India). John William Burgon's "Petra"—with its one memorable line: "A [illegible]"—is [illegible] the Newdigates. For many [illegible] their subjects set by the chancellor, were meditations on Volney's prose work *Les Ruines* (1791), which had inspired Shelley's "Ozymandias." Even Macaulay imagined a [illegible] the ruins of London Bridge. Archaeology in Ruskin's lifetime gave the history [illegible] that, like civilizations, had flourished and disappeared millions of years ago. The past seemed to [illegible] Darwinism, confronted by the [illegible] followed by a new beginning.

What Ruskin saw in all this was that civilizations that took thousands of years to mature could be destroyed in a second. One Austrian shell through the roof of San Marco could make ashes of a Venetian. Time itself is enemy enough of the arts: watercolors and photographs are irrevocably fading. Automobile exhaust in our times [illegible] ing the Parthenon. Turner's paintings, as Ruskin observed, kept their brilliant colors for a few hours only, losing their intensity as they dried. The skies of Europe were darkening. Venice was disappearing into the Adriatic.

Ruskin had traced European painting from Turner back to its medieval beginnings, architecture back to the Romanesque. He had consistently laid down ethics and a morality for individual works and styles. Egyptian art was executed by slaves, how could it be good? Greek art was sensual and therefore morally suspect. Ruskin burned Turner's pornographic drawings (and Charles Eliot Norton, after Ruskin's death, burned Ruskin's correspondence with Rose La Touche). Victorians thought in categories of foul and fair. The aristocracy knew "what's done, and what isn't done"—a taboo system much stronger than law.

Ruskin's mind evolved, book by book. He thought and [illegible] his way out of Victorian constraints, or tried to, and went mad in the process. Hilton charts this dramatic change, an awakening that was as tragic as Lear and as triumphant as Spinoza's escape from dogma and superstition into crystalline reason. Ruskin did not abandon his evangelical fundamentalism; he transformed it. He evolved a philosophy of religion in which morality and art were complementary and mutually vital.

His sense of the soul and [illegible] [illegible] sovereign. England's economic system [illegible] It created more [illegible] (a word he coined) than wealth. Its proponents, moreover, didn't know what real wealth was. They had lost their sense of moral decency (Ruskin resigned his professorship at Oxford rather than [illegible] vivisection in the medical school). Ruskin decided that

Turner's glorious paganism had been fair, that the soul does not survive the death of the body, that the grace of God was as evident in Aristotle as in St. Paul. The England he began to imagine in *Fors Clavigera* was to be organized in accordance with this new value system: a socialist society devoted to justice, significant work (handicraft rather than manufacture), administered by benevolent "captains" of guilds, with happy clean children and noble stonemasons like the ones who had raised Chartres in French fields.

Hilton promises us a study of *Fors* as a sort of third volume of his biography. The book still belongs to the distinguished list of worthy and influential works that are almost never read even by those interested in literature and ideas: Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, Horace Traubel's *Conversations with Walt Whitman in Camden*, Thoreau's *Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, the Bible. The one book of Ruskin's that people seem to read, *Praeterita*, began as a part of *Fors*.

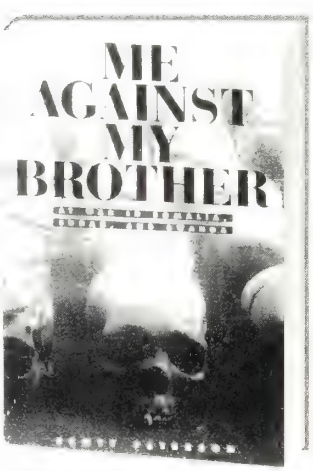
A more eccentric work than *Fors Clavigera* has never been written (unless it is *Fors Clavigera*). The book's original purpose, to found the Guild of St. George, becomes incidental. Its hero is Theseus; its Ariadne, Rose La Touche; and its Minotaur is the economics of capitalism, laissez-faire-ness, banks, usury, and the kind of advertising that makes the inferior product seem to be the best. In short, our own world of engineered obsolescence, scoundrels in high places, and eleven different taxes and surcharges on one telephone bill.

One of the oldest images in world art and literature is that of a hero—Gilgamesh, Odysseus, Samson, Beowulf, St. George, and perhaps the one hunter on the cave walls at Lascaux—facing a monster, a dragon, a demon. On the night of February 22, 1878, at Brantwood, the fifty-nine-year-old Ruskin fought with the Devil. He took off all his clothes, to be armorless like David before Goliath. Being Ruskin, he wrote it all down in his diary, before and after. Hilton analyzes these cryptic, terrifying, and pitiful pages with subtlety and insight. It was a battle of symbol against symbol—a St. Anthony contending with hallucinations. Faith [illegible] faith, [illegible] Puritan [illegible] want [illegible] free [illegible]

These [illegible] truth with [illegible] the most decent [illegible] Severn (whom he [illegible] baby talk), accusing [illegible] hand of being treelocker [illegible] He thought the cook was [illegible] torture. He gathered the household [illegible] their knees at the front door [illegible] to Cardinal Manning. He became [illegible] impossible that Joan agreed to [illegible] ing Brantwood for a boarding house in Folkestone, where he was lonely, disoriented, and a stranger among strangers.

The great mind that had been so skilled in perception in Ruskin's youth and so omnidirectional in his maturity flared into an incandescent irrationality, and went out. For his last ten years he sat in his room at Brantwood, shielded by the Severns. Turner, too, had gone batty, Swift and Nietzsche, Emerson and John Clare. Ruskin's madness had a kind of logic to it: his frustrated loves, his failure to make people understand his vision of a just society,

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and his religious doubts compounded his despair. Add old age, a cruelly trussed hernia (from dancing a jig), loneliness, and disembodied voices.

BIOGRAPHERS GRASP THE exteriors of lives and give what account they can of their interiors. These can be wholly different realities. The existence in space and time of the art historians Max Raphael and Erwin Panofsky, two great inheritors of what Ruskin began, will be dramatic and interesting when we have biographies of them as complete as Hilton's of Ruskin, but until we read their books our knowledge of them is little better than ignorance. Curiously, we don't believe this. I know several intelligent people who have read biographies of Joyce and Wittgenstein but not Joyce and Wittgenstein. Hilton's immensely readable and meticulously researched life of Ruskin will be read by hundreds of people who have never read a word of Ruskin and probably won't.

What they will miss is Ruskin's voice. It is, even at its most querulous and preacherly, not writing but speaking. It is, in a beautiful sense, thinking aloud, at its most congenial, conversational, richly anecdotal, and always observant. He is the world's best companion for looking at a Venetian building or Gothic carving. He can tell you that the stone flowers that seem to be mere decoration at the top of a cathedral column grow wild in the fields round about. He takes nothing for granted; his readers are children to be taught, to be beguiled into learning. For one of his Oxford lectures he brought a plow, to make certain that his students knew what one looked like. (The lecture was on sculpture.) He could make passages from the Bible sound like words you had never heard before. A lecture that began with Michelangelo ended with the proper shoes for little girls; one on landscape painting ended with the industrial pollution of rivers and what to do about it.

Most of the problems Ruskin addressed are ours as well. The century that began in the year of his death saw the most terrible wars in all of recorded time; and cruelty, without shame or pity, has gone on disgracing humanity. For fifty years Ruskin tried to show us how to live and how to praise. ■

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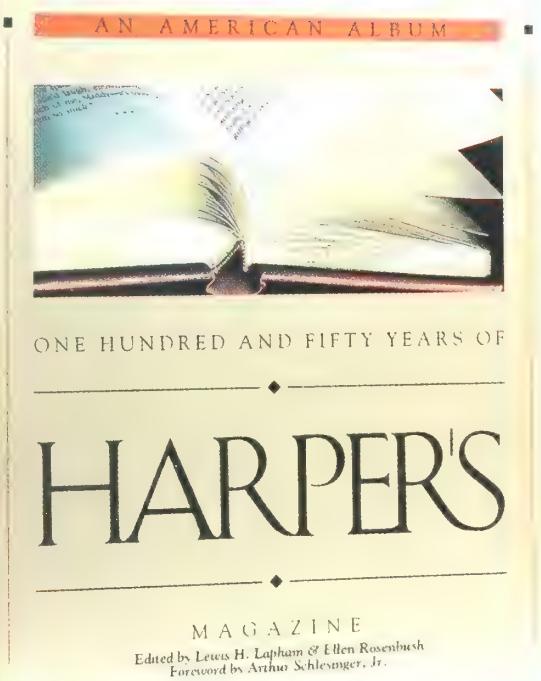
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CORRECTIVE TISSUE

As an anatomist I am compelled to clear up two errors in Roger Hodge's otherwise fascinating critique of Matthew Barney's new film, *Cremaster 2* ["Onan the Magnificent," April]. Despite Hodge's specific assertion to the contrary, the cremaster is not "the muscle that raises and lowers the testicles." Muscles can only contract and therefore are typically arranged in antagonistic pairs. For example, the biceps and triceps have opposite functions—to flex and extend the elbow, respectively. Without such pairings, a contracted muscle would have no way of returning to its uncontracted position. The cremaster can only raise the testicles. But what is its antagonist? Gravity. Hodge also suggests that the cremaster is "responsible for the fetal descent of the reproductive organs." This function, however, is the responsibility of another muscle, the gubernaculum. The striking resemblance of this muscle's name to that of the adjective "gubernatorial" (in reference to the governor of a state) is not coincidental; both stem from the same Latin root, *gubernator*, or "helmsman." Just as the governor guides the policies of state, the gubernaculum guides the descent of the testicles from their embryonic position near the kidneys to their final position in the scrotum.

Christian Sulka
University of Chicago
Chicago

Roger Hodge responds:

My God! Can it be true! It cannot! But it is true: Matthew Barney's oeuvre rests on a simple anatomical error! Is there some way out of this aporia? There must be. Surely it makes little difference to the work of a great artist that he happened to get some of his facts wrong. The images remain,

s do the objects—and Barney's films ontinue to astonish, do they not?

They do not. Professor Sidor's let er does not point out just my error, he cremaster muscle is quite simply he master metaphor, the dominant rope, the guiding figure of Barney's nature work. The *Cremaster* films de ict a mythic descent, a going down hat announces the emergence of mas culinity, the advent of potency. Yet Barney's chosen symbol performs the pposite task.

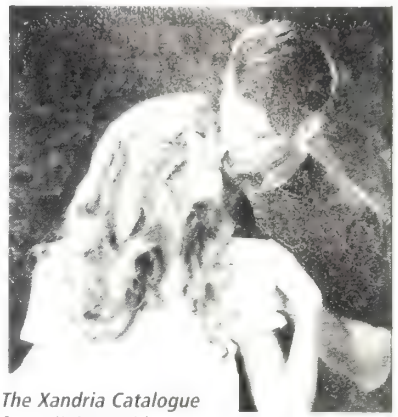
The scales have fallen from my eyes! Where once I was lost, now I am found. Where once I had found a di vine savior sent to redeem the art world from the sins of genital idola try, I now discover a bungler's waste and filled with excrement. Onan has not merely spilled his seed upon the barren ground; he has cast it into the eyes of a gullible public so dazzled by sophistry that they—that I!—failed to ec ognize the *Cremaster* cycle for what it most obviously is: a fraud, at best a put-on, a burlesque, an obscene joke.

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1 Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines, 1741–1850*, Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Mass.); 2 *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, Gale Group (Farmington Hills, Mich.); 3 Dennis Papazian, Center for the Study of Russia, University of Michigan (Dearborn); 4 CNN (Atlanta); 5 *Harper's* research; 6 Harold Evans, *The American Century*, Alfred A. Knopf (N.Y.C.); 7,8 Department of the Census; Sarah L. Mills, 9 Russell Hunter, *Aviation Safety Handbook*, University of Oklahoma Press (Norman); 10 Professor Ronald Takaki, University of California (Berkeley); 11 Lucy Sante, *Low Life*, Vintage Books (N.Y.C.); 12,13 Worldwatch Institute (Washington); 14 International Social Science and Information Centre (Washington, D.C.); 15 *Historical Statistics of the United States*, National Geographic Society (Washington); 16 Federal Election Commission (Washington); 17 Hyperion, *Happy Birthday*, University Press of Kansas (Lawrence); 19 *Oxford Companion to the Supreme Court*, Oxford University Press (N.Y.C.); 18 Lucien Stryk, *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, University Press of Kansas (Lawrence); 19 *Oxford Companion to the Supreme Court*, Oxford University Press (N.Y.C.); 20 Institute for Collaborative Economics (Palo Alto, Calif.); 21 International Data Corporation (Framingham, Mass.)/World Wildlife Federation (Washington); 22 United Nations (N.Y.C.); 23 Embassy of Peru (Washington); 24 Roslin Institute (Roslin, Scotland); 25 Allentown College of St. Francis de Sales (Center Valley, Pa.); 26 United Nations (N.Y.C.); 27 Human Rights Watch (London); 28 U.S. Irrigation Committee (N.Y.C.); 29,30 U.S. Department of Energy; 31 Royal Dutch Shell Group (London); 32 Texas State Historical Association (Austin); 33 Krone Pen (Battle Creek, Mich.); 34 Robert Maxim, Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village Museum (Dearborn, Mich.); 35 *Encyclopedia of World Biography*, Gale Group (Farmington Hills, Mich.); 36 VH-1 (N.Y.C.); 37 National Institute of Environmental Research (Cambridge, Mass.); 38 Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner*, Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Mass.); 39 Dr. Jim McNeal, Texas A&M University (Bryan); 40 *The Encyclopedia of American Facts and Dates*, Crowell (N.Y.C.)

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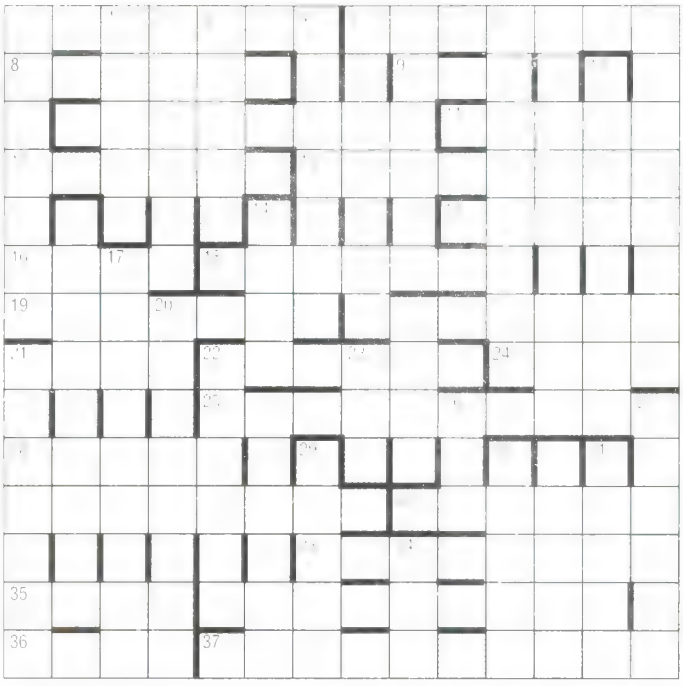
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High Honors

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

In this month's puzzle the contestants had a great chance to catch Lucy's eye. The relationship will be revealed by reading the boldfaced squares from the left side of the diagram to the right.

Clues include four proper names. Don't worry about spelling. A solved puzzle is a perfect square. For information on how to enter the contest, see the box on page 126. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 126.



Across

8 Circling eastern egret, put down in this page . . . (6)
9 [illegible] (9)
11 Almost amidst under the air, Ancient [illegible] (5)
12 Having material to [illegible] (6)
13 Father edges [illegible] (5)
15 He [illegible] (5)
16 Little [illegible] (4)
18 Decorated [illegible] (7)
19 Summer [illegible] (5)
21 [illegible] (4)
24 Shy to the [illegible] (4)
25 The [illegible] (4)
28 Wrecked [illegible] (5)
32 [illegible] (5)
33 English students write "Bull!" on Scottish [illegible] (8)
35 He [illegible] (4)
36 [illegible] (4)
37 After some [illegible] (6)

Down

1 [illegible] (8)
2 [illegible] (6)
3 [illegible] (5)
4 [illegible] (7)
5 [illegible] (7)
6 [illegible] (8)
7 [illegible] (8)
8 [illegible] (8)
14 [illegible] (4)
17 [illegible] (7)
20 [illegible] (8)
21 [illegible] (5)
22 [illegible] (6)
23 [illegible] (5)
26 [illegible] (8)
27 [illegible] (6)
29 [illegible] (5)
30 [illegible] (5)
31 [illegible] (5)
34 [illegible] (4)

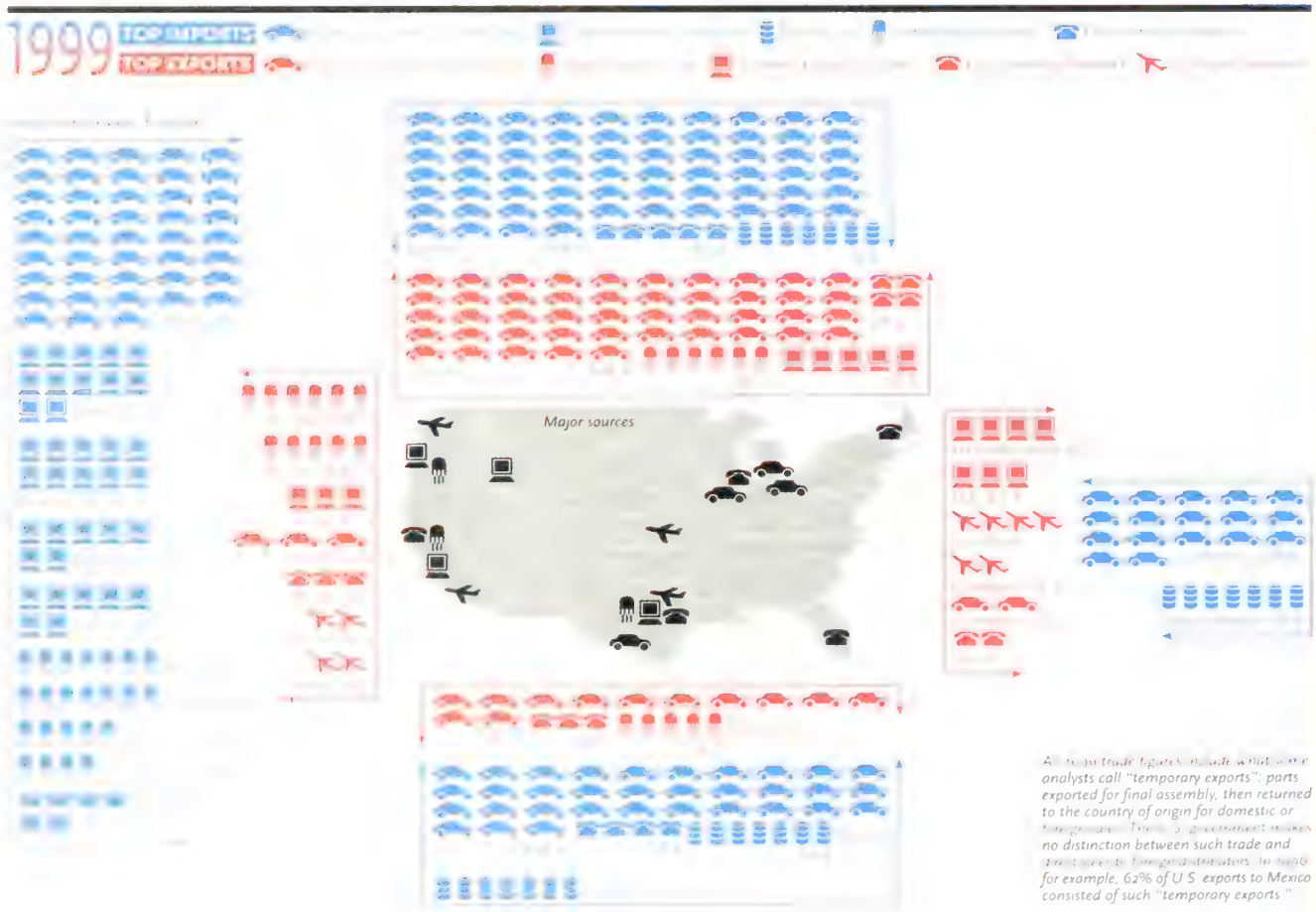
Contest Rules

[illegible]

TRADING UP

In 1850, nearly 9,000 miles of railroad track and canals had not yet linked New York City with Chicago. America had already cornered the world's cotton market and had recorded eleven annual trade surpluses. Raw materials accounted for nearly three quarters of exports; manufactured products for barely a tenth—a balance that would almost reverse itself over the next hundred years. By 1900 the manufactured portions of exports and imports were almost equal, and the United States had become the world's top exporter of oil—cornering the iron and steel market fifteen years later—beginning its transition from a caterer to Old World needs into an inventor of new ones—gasoline, machine parts, soft drinks—which it promptly satisfied. Today these needs are often intangible; they include business and financial services, tourism, films, TV programs, and software. Although earnings from such services still account for less than half of U.S. exports, since the 1970's they have offset the U.S. trade deficit in goods, suggesting that the country's ultimate economic role may be as an exporter of desire itself.





All trade figures include what some analysts call "temporary exports": parts exported for final assembly, then returned to the country of origin for domestic or foreign sale. The U.S. government makes no distinction between such trade and true sales to foreign customers. In 1999, for example, 62% of U.S. exports to Mexico consisted of such "temporary exports."

3 9042 05043754 7

July

TRUTHS ABOUT

HARPER'S



RUNNING DRY

What Happens When the World No Longer Has Enough Freshwater?

By Jacques Leslie

LET'S GO: SILICON VALLEY!

Wherein the Author Stalks the Flighty Webhead in His Habitat

By Dennis Cass

WORLD WORLD

How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Blob

By Thomas de Zengotita

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A story by Joyce Carol Oates

Also: Donna Tartt and Walker Evans

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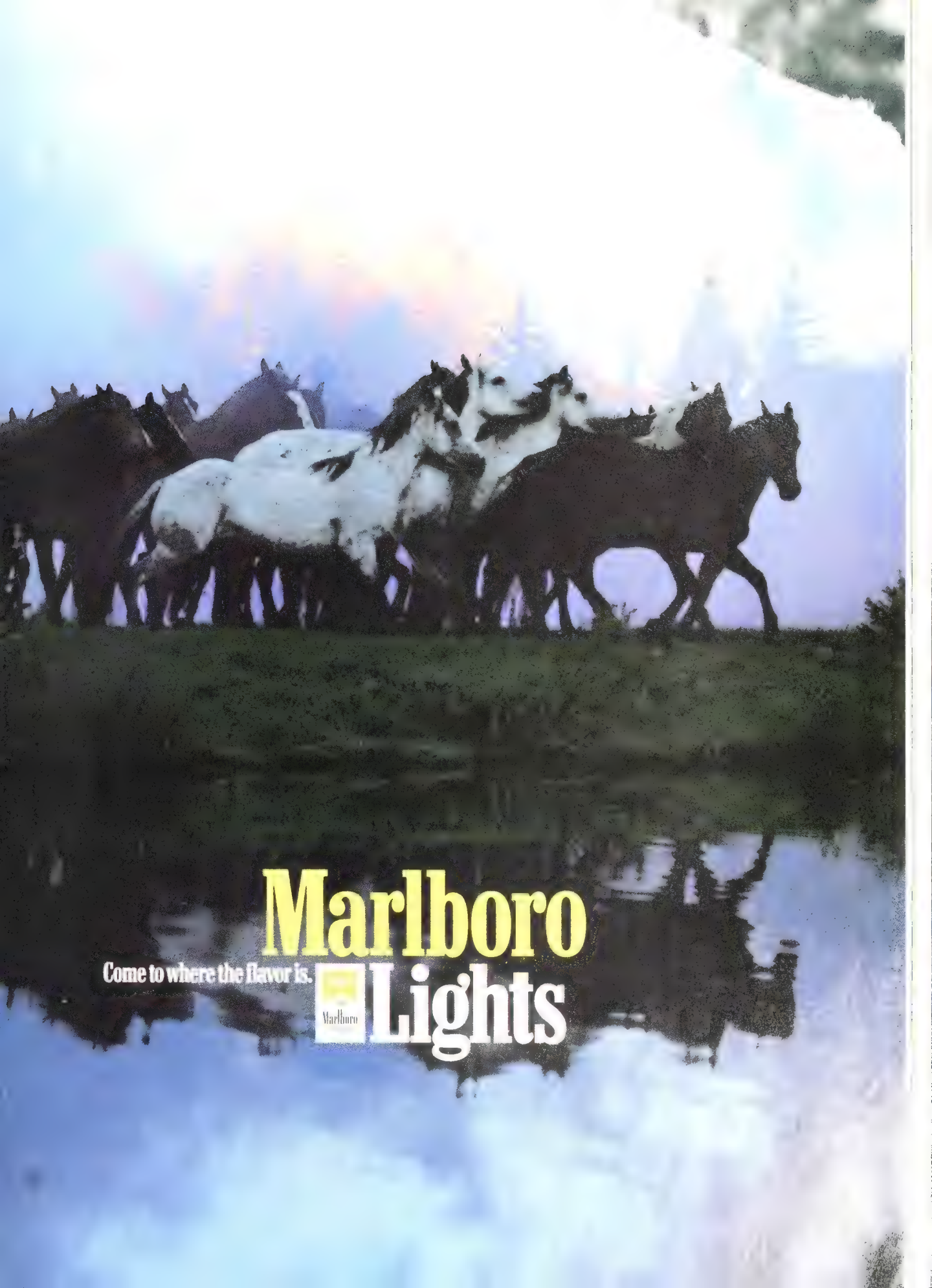


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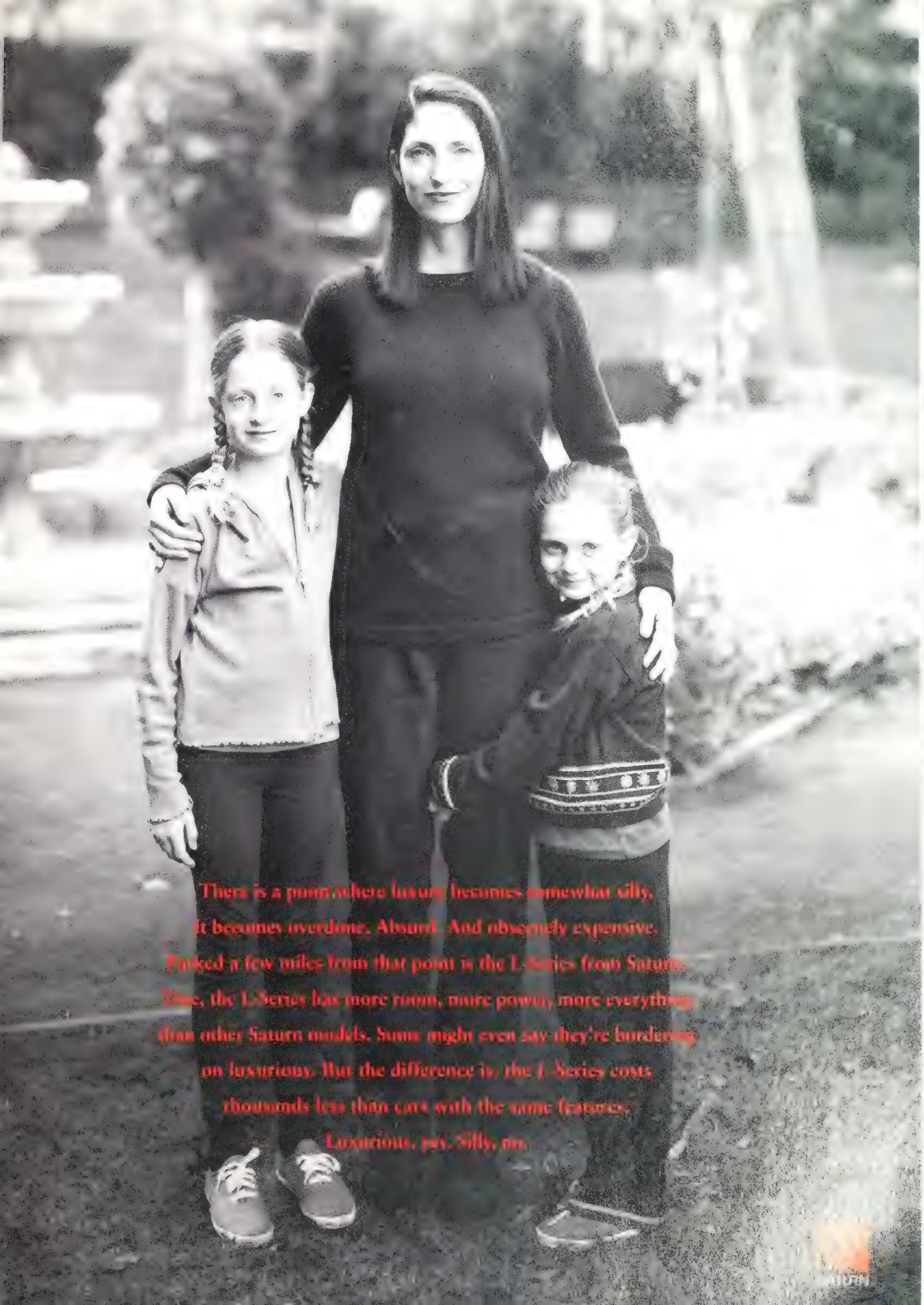


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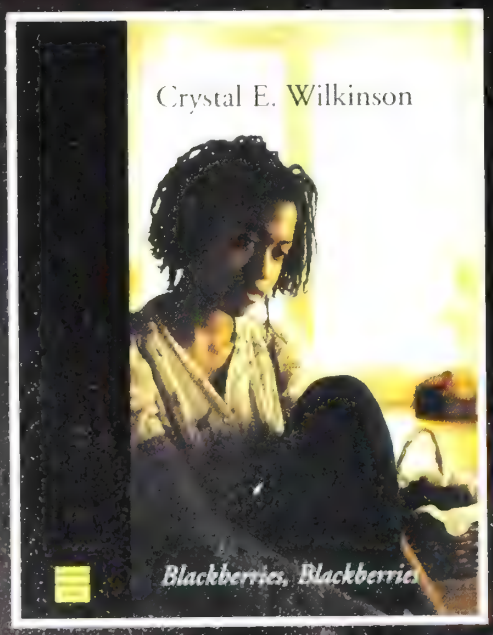
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HARPER'S

LETTERS

Anarchy in the U.S.A.

As fascinating as David Samuels's speculative and unpolluted psychoanalysis of the Eugene, Oregon, anarchist community was ["Notes from Underground," May], did it ever occur to him that instead of waxing poetic about the emotional isolation of the story's subjects, it might have been worth considering whether they have a point?

However much Samuels may wish to attribute the radicals' disaffection to teen angst, the fact remains that major corporations such as McDonald's and Starbucks rely on products gathered at great ecological cost by Third World laborers. Nike uses sweatshop labor in Southeast Asia while offering money to CEO Phil Knight's alma mater (University of Oregon) to boost its reputation in the state. Congress and Bill Clinton enacted the salvage rider, which all but eliminated court oversight of the plundering of the last old-growth forests. And in Eugene the police consistently harass those who look different, working with the business community to set up laws aimed at removing "undesirable" elements from streets, parks, and other former hangouts. Perhaps a genuine and warranted concern for the future is at work, rather than mere isolation attributable to the Internet and adolescent hormones.

[illegible]
Madison, Wis.

[illegible] *Agment.*

David Samuels uses his encounter with a group of radical true believers in Eugene to confront his own spiritual malaise. Measured against his own existential despair, their vision fails. No surprise there: the Crystal Palace failed Dostoevsky's Underground Man too.

Samuels claims kinship with the anarchists, based on a shared experience of reality slippage, leading to the realization that "the world you perceive is actually the result of a more or less complicated bargain that you strike with yourself over time." But even though Samuels himself repeatedly blurs the distinction, his reality slippage is existential, while the radicals he writes about experience a slippage between reality as the culture presents it and the ugly truths of power and politics. Between his view and theirs lies a yawning gulf.

In using his own private concerns as the filter through which to report on a nascent political movement, Samuels does not do his subjects justice, at least on their own terms.

Jack Petranker
Berkeley, Calif.

Was it really wise to send a budding novelist to report on an important social phenomenon? Samuels tells us a great deal about his plane trip and hotel room but misses several key points about the city of Eugene and its anarchist movement.

Eugene is a deeply divided place. It is both a hard-nosed mill town and a university city, in addition to having a large counterculture contingent. Unfortunately, the Eugene police have

phatically taken sides in the result
g skirmishes. Through their arrogant,
usive treatment of an important sec-
on of the community, they have
ought the anarchist movement upon
emselves, at least in its more vitriolic
rms. The police in Eugene are almost
out of control as the LAPD, though
obably not as corrupt. Their violence
the tree-cutting episode of 1997,
entioned by Officer Tod Schneider,
as merely the most egregious inci-
nt (there also have been several un-
plained shootings), but it was fol-
wed, at the very next demonstration,
the first incident involving proper-
damage by the radicals.

Samuels managed to interview a re-
arkably atypical Eugene policeman.
hen Schneider wears that uniform,
e is indistinguishable, in the public's
es, from other, less enlightened offi-
rs. It makes him part of a hostile oc-
upying force in his own neighbor-
od. The attack on his car was
nfortunate and unjust but hardly sur-
ising. Considering the level of police
olence in Eugene, the reaction has
en mild.

I am not an anarchist, and I don't
pport the anarchists' actions, espe-
ally when they parasitize other
ople's demonstrations. It is important
note, however, that their actions
ave been, for the most part, measured
nd disciplined—in Seattle, far more
sciplined than those of the police.
he window smashing was a relief,
nsidering some of the anarchists'
ior rhetoric, and indeed some of the
ovocation.

harles Nesdin
orvallis, Oreg.

I was surprised after reading David
muels's article that he seems not to
ave noticed the anarchists' most bla-
nt hypocrisy. They want to improve
hird World living conditions and let
ose left behind catch up to the West,
ut they are engaged in the very be-
avior that they attribute to the cor-
orate pigs: hurting those they claim to
elp. When they break the windows at
cDonald's or destroy the local Nike
ore, they are hurting not corporate
merica but the little guy behind the
unter who is merely trying to sur-
ive. By putting him out of work, the
anarchists put someone else into pover-
ty and onto government payrolls. They
don't even prick capitalist America,
because McBusiness will take its busi-
ness somewhere else. Thus, by at-
tacking the people they are supposed
to be converting, the anarchists only
display their ignorance.

Sharon Pokorski
Liebenthal, Kans.

Carrying the Toxic Torch

Although Greenpeace has serious
concerns about the long-term man-
agement of the landfills on the
Olympic site in Sydney, Australia, and
is actively encouraging the authorities
to remediate the dioxin-laden sedi-
ments in Homebush Bay, some of the
claims made by Sharon Beder ["Let
the Spin Begin," May] are misleading
and deserve comment.

It is true that the area in which the
Olympic venues have been construct-
ed was a neglected industrial waste-
land. It is worth remembering, how-
ever, that the bulk of the material
dumped there was household and con-
struction rubbish, not drums of dioxin.
It may be easy to characterize the mil-
lions of tons of rubbish transferred to
leaky landfills as toxic, but this simply
isn't the case. In all likelihood a pro-
portion of it is indeed hazardous and, as
Beder points out, ideally should have
been separated and treated. The use of
"leaky fills" may not be a perfect solu-
tion, but it at least acknowledges the re-
ality that contaminants will drain out
of a landfill and represents an attempt
to capture and treat them.

In short, the Olympic site may not
be perfect, but it is far less hazardous
than it was twenty years ago—a point
that seems to have eluded Beder.

The toxic chemicals in Homebush
Bay itself are another story. They are
still unconfined and dangerous, and
they cast a dark shadow on Sydney's
reputation as host of the first ever
"Green" Olympic Games. This is clear-
ly demonstrated by the high levels of
dioxins, DDT, and other chemicals
found in fish and other marine life in
the bay.

In 1997 the New South Wales gov-
ernment committed $21 million (not
$17 million) for the remediation of
Homebush Bay after Greenpeace situ-





I was in another world.
enraptured. unable to move ...



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By Lewis H. Lapham

American Talent Management
1504 Sunset Boulevard
West Hollywood, CA 90069

May 2, 2XXX

Ms. Vivian Taylor
461 Eucalyptus Drive
Cupertino, CA 95015

Dear Ms. Taylor,

American Talent Management doesn't make promises, but I believe that we can do something for little Leslie. She's a beautiful child, as appealing a six-year-old girl as any of us here remember ever having seen, and I can't find it necessary why she shouldn't become a headline name.

As you must by now fully well have guessed, a lot of people come to us with large ambitions for their children, but it isn't often that we can find them contracts. Leslie is one of the rare exceptions, fortunate not only in her blonde hair and angelic smile but also, if you'll allow me to say so, in her mother's appreciation of the ways in which the entertainment business has changed since the days when Judy Garland was singing "Over the Rainbow." When you brought Leslie and her canary into the office last Tuesday for her audition with the television camera, you didn't ask us to watch her sing and everybody in the meeting was impressed by your sense of what interests the producers who book the acts on "Mornin' Time USA."

None of us doubts that Leslie was born to be a star. She's as wonderful on camera as JonBenet Ramsey, and not person is truly remarkable. We asked her to tell us how much she loved us if she were talking to Barbara Walters, and you will notice that at no point in the interview does she fail to give an adorable answer.

I enclose the videocassette together with our contract, and I think you'll be pleased by Leslie's command of the talk-show language. You have a credible daughter, Ms. Taylor, but, as you also must know, we're dealing in perishable goods. Yesterday a precocious comedy, and then we spoke about the new media deal, twice as much time and a percent. Elián González as to either John F. Kennedy Jr. or Princess Di, I didn't have to tell you that we must gather our rosebuds while we may. Leslie's current expiration date is her fifth birthday, the age at which young girls begin to run away to the circus or adult entertainment.

Twenty or thirty years ago we might have placed Leslie in a soap commercial or with one of the Hollywood producers who knew that the trend in advertising these days favors high-speed visual effects, hard-edged and ironic. Nor do we have much to do with the network executives. The sought-after directors in town look for kids with empty faces and lost eyes. They think we're talking about our postmodern descent into barbarism, and they put out casting calls for children who can play caricatures for the monstrous and grotesque—deaf-mutes, victims of drug and sexual abuse, small psychopaths. You and I both know that the movies are untrue and untrue, but we live with the consequences in ways that we might not always wish, and for Leslie at the moment the most we could expect would be a cameo role in the [illegible] In my experience the little girls that get in the wrong place at the wrong time, pushed off a chair in the opening sequence that tells the audience to expect cruelty but important lessons.

American Talent Management doesn't [illegible] with false hopes. You and I will have to weigh the clause in the contract about your own appearance on "Mornin' Time USA."

Maybe. But we need to be clear-headed and objective. What we have is a market for "reality," for strong material that will [illegible] high-tech theater. The news media feed the appetite of an audience increasingly dissatisfied with the flow of make-believe blood, and their competition for product obeys Darwin's rule of the survival of the fittest.

We already have pitched Leslie to the producers of the CBS show that strands sixteen people on an uninhabited island in the South China Sea. They liked the idea, but [illegible] animals and the cockroaches [illegible] Several other possibilities still in early development suggested [illegible] reality-based programming has found its way to [illegible] the Miss America [illegible]

preparation for the unexpected turning of fortune's wheel. Ellis presumably left a small-caliber pistol lying [illegible] find one under the kitchen sink.

From what you told us about Leslie's public school, I don't imagine that [illegible] unforms with a manifesto and semi-automatic rifles, Leslie shoots them down like dogs. A great story, Vivian, and one to which American Talent Management would be proud to lend [illegible] cur in late October, and I can see [illegible] gress and Larry King, Leslie on the White House lawn, Leslie the star of both presidential election campaigns.

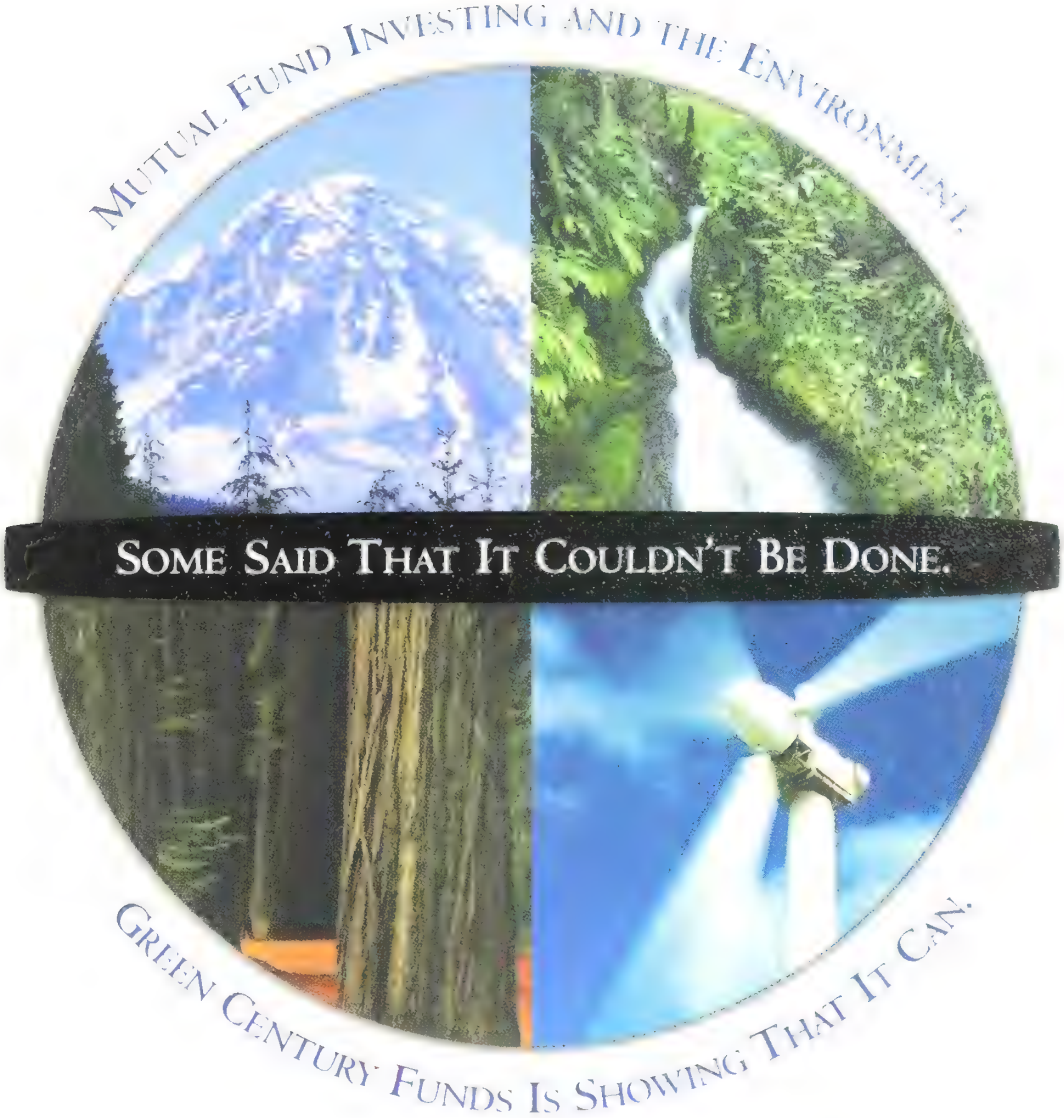
The more I think about Leslie as property the more I like her in the role of the little girl who saves the day. Another agency might advise you to play it the other way—Leslie shooting her gym teacher, Leslie [illegible] but although those stories make excellent copy, they don't help build a career. They are not heart-warming stories, Vivian, and they seldom last much longer than a week. Don't listen to consultants who tell you otherwise. They might offer to take a smaller percentage, but they don't have Leslie's best interests at heart. Read our contract carefully and you will see that it awards you a generous share of the posthumous subsidiary rights.

[illegible] shouldn't continue Leslie's voice and [illegible] nobody ever knows what's coming [illegible] election in November maybe we'll find ourselves in a market for spelling bees and banjo music.

Once you have reviewed the terms [illegible] agreement we'll set up another meeting; in the meantime please say hello to Leslie's canary and give the [illegible] of our affection and esteem.

Yours sincerely,

Howard Fineman



Some said that creating a mutual fund that sought competitive returns for its investors AND invested in companies that worked to do great things for the environment wouldn't be possible. The Green Century Funds have spent the last eight years showing that it is. With a 151.45% return for the one-year period ended March 31, 2000, the Green Century Balanced Fund ranked #1 out of all 458 balanced funds tracked by Lipper. For the three- and five-year periods ended March 31, 2000, the Green Century Balanced Fund ranked #1 out of the 340 and 237 balanced funds respectively tracked by Lipper.

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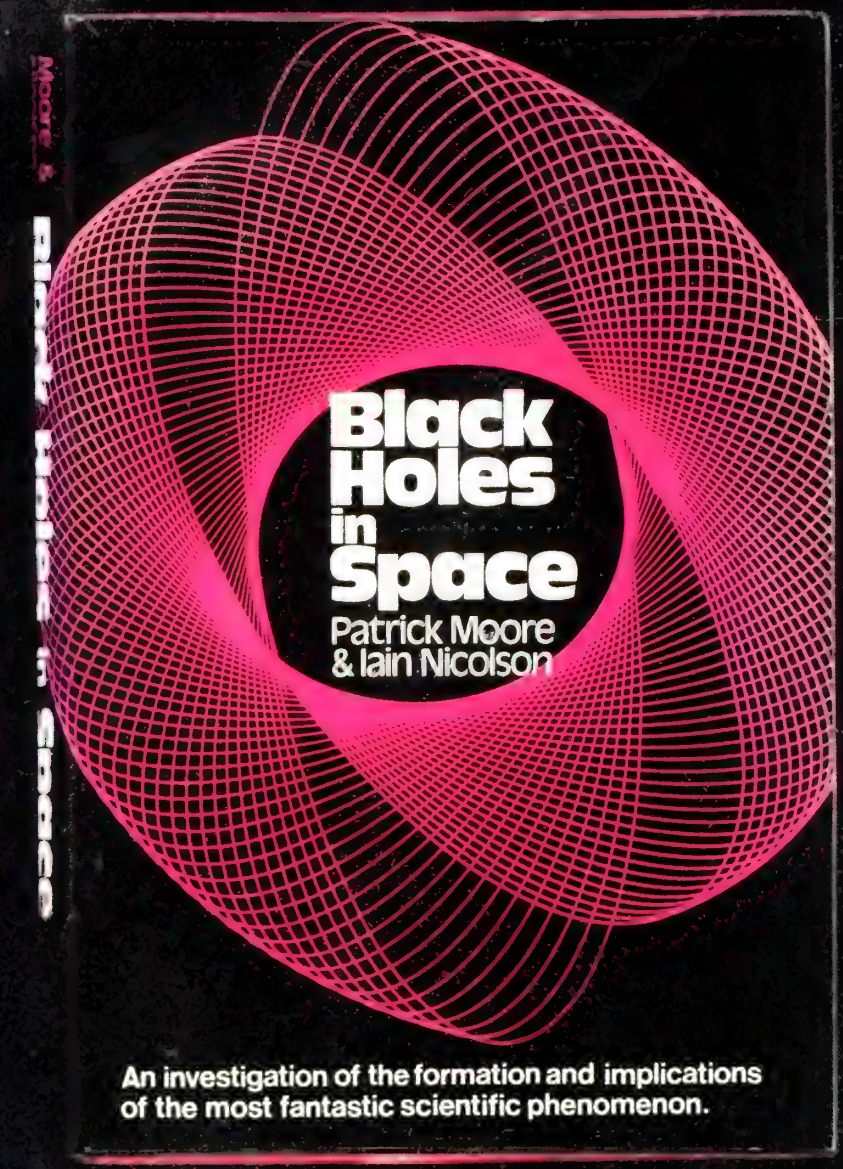
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[illegible]OSE WHO APPRECIATE QUALITY ENJOY IT RESPO[illegible]

HARPER'S INDEX

Number of full flight tests of the U.S. National Missile Defense system conducted in the program's first seven years : 2
Number that were deemed a success : 1
Amount by which a congressional estimate of the system's cost exceeds the Pentagon's : $19,000,000,000
Percentage change since the end of the Cold War in the number of U.S. Army troops : –39
Percentage change since then in the number of U.S. troop deployments : +400
Chance that a U.N. peacekeeping mission to Africa has included American troops : 1 in 9
Chance that a peacekeeping mission undertaken since 1989 was in Africa : 1 in 2
Amount the U.S. proposed charging the U.N. last May to fly a battalion of peacekeepers into Sierra Leone : $17,000,000
Estimated amount it would cost to fly in a battalion via commercial airline : $6,000,000
Number of donkeys used by the U.N. last year to deliver humanitarian aid to displaced families in Afghanistan : 1,500
Percentage of wells there that are dry : 60
Number of months after severe floods hit India last October that the country suffered severe drought : 6
Percentage change in Ethiopia's population since its last famine in 1984 : +42
Amount Ethiopia has spent on war with Eritrea since 1998 : $300,000,000
Change since 1987 in the percentage of sub-Saharan Africans living on less than $1 a day : 0
Number of Susan B. Anthony dollars the U.S. minted last year to meet new vending-machine demand : 37,000,000
Portion of the funding for a national monument to black Revolutionary War soldiers that has been raised since 1985 : 1/5
Percentage of Americans who say that the U.S. government is no longer "of, by, and for the people" : 54
Percentage of households on U.S. Indian reservations that have phone service : 47
Number of U.S. counties in which a full-time minimum-wage earner can afford a one-bedroom apartment : 0
Number of pawnbrokers for every bank in Laredo, Texas : 1.2
Chance that an American is governed by a Bush : 1 in 8
Chance that a Florida maximum-security state prison guard has been arrested : 1 in 6
Chance that a U.S. major league baseball player is foreign-born : 1 in 5
Percentage change since 1995 in the average price of a major league baseball ticket : +41
Percentage change since last August in the price of a seat on the New York Stock Exchange : –36
Rank of Manhattan among New York State counties using the largest amount of pesticide in 1997 : 1
Average annual number of civilians killed by New York City police under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani : 23
Average annual number killed under his predecessor, David Dinkins : 29
Chances that a drug offense by a black U.S. juvenile with no prior jail time will result in imprisonment : 48 in 100,000
Chance that a drug offense by a white juvenile with no prior jail time will do so : 1 in 100,000
Amount the U.S. government spent on drug testing per employee who tested positive between 1997 and 1998 : $35,222
Percentage of Icelanders who have declined including their DNA in a private company's national genetic database : 7
Percentage by which the estimated number of genes on the human genome has increased since 1995 : 100
Minimum number of new bacteria species discovered to exist in the human mouth last year : 37
Percentage change in the number of U.S. beach closures or pollution advisories between 1997 and 1998 : +74
Pounds of fossilized wood stolen from Arizona's Petrified Forest each day : 66
Number of hidden video cameras discovered in the men's showers at a Yosemite campground last July : 2
Fine for "nudity" that Mississippi has proposed levying on fully clothed men "in a discernibly turgid state" : $2,000

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of May 2000. Sources available upon request.
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July 1, 1980. Sucked from shelf, enters parallel dimension or something.



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READINGS

[Essay]

AGAINST SMOOTHNESS

From a convocation address given in April by Mark Kingwell at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Kingwell teaches philosophy at the University of Toronto. His most recent book, In Pursuit of Happiness, *was published this month by Crown.*

The world of our everyday experience is full of smooth objects, perhaps more so now than ever. The dominant aesthetic in everything from running shoes to monumental architecture is the flowing curve and the slick surface, the inviting mound and the bright hue. Increasingly the world is crowded with blobs—blobby furniture, blobby cars, blobby buildings. Modernism's glass-and-steel boxes, the towering slabs of the International Style, have given way to the warmer, more inviting surfaces and textures of the nursery. We are witnessing, in our footstools and wristwatches and personal computers, a sort of infantilization of the postmodern imagination. Cutting-edge running shoes now resemble socks or sheaths that fit over the foot, eliminating all trace of their functionality. Cars shrink into ever smaller spaces, filling out their easy-park dimensions with an inviting roundness altogether unlike the aerodynamic, fighter-plane slashes of an earlier era. They are built not for speed but for lovability. Everywhere we turn there is something—an armchair, a cradle, a verse—that makes us want to coo and murmur, to pet and fondle.

Perhaps this is not so bad; smoothness may well be one of the great achievements of human life. The smooth face of the shaved body bespeaks a mastery of sharp-edge tools as much as an aesthetic of separating oneself from the crudeness of nature; the smooth language between civil neighbors evens out, or deflects, the struggles of an always lurking state of nature. There is a long and profound association between the elimination of (natural) roughness and the creation of (artificial) civilization. Everybody loves baby-smooth skin, most people appreciate a smoothly turned phrase. Smoothness signals comfort, ease, respite from the hard or the challenging. There are smooth objects in nature—nothing is so inviting to the touch as a rock rounded by time and the sea, nothing so exquisitely fresh as the surface of a living tree just after its bark has been removed. But surely we manufacture more smoothness than we find.

It would not be an exaggeration, in fact, to make smoothness a gauge of progress in human affairs, just as, for most people, it provides a measure of the success they enjoy in their lives. We speak of individuals, behavior, and [illegible] more or less polished, implying an assessment of value added as roughness is eliminated. Here

the aesthetic and the ethical are not separable. The smooth arrival of the point guard into the lane, the smooth delivery of the one on the ball, the smooth glide of the dancing pair across the tile floor—all these things please us, the system right, in a way we feel in our guts but would be hard pressed to justify in rational terms. Grace is ever its own argument, is perhaps above argument altogether. Speed is the dominant trope of the age, but easy speed, unhurried velocity, is even better: it is the essence of cool.

Yet there are dangers. Aesthetic sense, too perfectly realized, becomes a form of meretricious deceit. Civil locutions are often exposed, eventually, as glib rather than polite, manipulative instead of friendly—the smooth operator is born. At a certain point smoothness approaches self-defeat, in ideas as much as anywhere. The newspapers and bookshelves are full of smooth additions to the fund of what the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has felicitously labeled "the already-thought." He means the pat phrases and familiar positions of everyday discourse, where everything said has the consistency of a bun at Mr. Submarine, at once predigested and stale. Theodor Adorno, writing in the blistering denunciatory spirit of his later years, saw such fluent, already masticated language as the active enemy of wisdom. "Only what they do not need first to understand, they consider understandable," Adorno writes in his elliptical little book *Minima Moralia*, "only the word coined by commerce, and really alienated, to niche themselves familiar." Writing well, doing anything well, is a tightrope walk, a delicate matter of placing one foot in front of the other to reach the goals of insight or fulfillment without falling into the abyss of glibness, superficiality, or familiarity. We want the hard to look easy, yes, but not for the easy to look easy. We crave the appearance of effortlessness, not effortlessness itself.

David Foster Wallace once usefully defined popular culture as "the symbolic representation of what people already believe." Think of the relentless way mainstream films and television and music every year create more and more sleek tokens in the dominant economy of cliché, complete with that familiar faintly irritated feeling that you're being sold the same thing over and over, that your intelligence, at some basic level, is being insulted by comfort. Do people actually say, in response to hard questions, "Yes. No. I don't know"? Are children always plucky or vile, presidents always stouthearted or hopelessly corrupt? Why do movie mothers prioritize [illegible] the way people in the general population do? Why are characters on television forever uttering sentiments that would arouse only consternation or bewilderment if they occurred in actual conversation?

Smoothness is simple, complexity is often rough. Is this enough to explain our quiescent ingestion of so much nonsense? We all know that the clichés that replace the reality of our experience are empty-headed and pernicious, and yet that knowledge has little effect. Most of the time it just reinforces the slight elation we feel at the merest interruption in the smooth transfer of already-thought elements from writer to screen to us. We have become slaves to our own smoothness. How grateful we are when a movie confounds even one minor expectation, challenges one little piece of received wisdom. How enthusiastically we react when a situation comedy shows a tiny spark of originality, when a pop album exhibits the slightest glimmer of cleverness. Can the same be said of the tactile sleekness of Nike's Air Max or the Macintosh G4? Surely these smartly crafted objects, these lovely consumer confections, are far removed from the lurking, pop-culture dangers of easy fatuity and comforting superficiality. Are they? Smooth objects, so seductive in their physical smoothness, so inviting in their suddenly iconic appearance in the novelty-hungry mediascape, are as misleading as any polished locution added to the enveloping language of cliché, any slick addition to the stock of the already-thought. They act to obscure the conditions of their own production, the way they are assembled in sweatshops that are anything but clean or polished. Here, in the small antique factories of what we choose to call the developing world, machines of an outmoded industrial age produce, paradoxically, the cathected objects of our postindustrial desire.

The smooth products of these throwback workshops are then smoothly extracted, arriving in flagship theme-park stores with no visible trace of their dirty origins. Sometimes even placed under glass—the new models premiering at the NikeTown in my neighborhood are displayed in elaborate cases, like handmade watches or Belgian gourmet chocolates—they come to us as if by divine fiat. They shimmer into existence like items ordered by voice interface from the Star Trek replicator. There is no acknowledgment of the bright and smooth thing emerging from the dark and jagged, that old-fashioned but still illuminating morality tale of the diamond in the rough, the gold in the dross. No, here in the hush of the polished-wood and brushed-steel environment, it's all gems all the time, everywhere smoothness smoothly presented. When an object appears with the hallmark easy swiftness of postmodern cool, we know instinctively to compare it not with the dirt and confusion of



Self-portrait (Thumb in Ear), 1[illegible] [illegible] Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

the actual place from which it came, wherever that may be, but with the bright image from television or print that heralded its arrival.

Anything that so thoroughly effaces the signs of its own origins would be worth reading with a skeptical eye, but the seductions of smoothness go beyond the placeless, spaceless, ethereal arrival of the shoe or the laptop. They embrace the larger value of efficiency, or usefulness, which in our day is most often thematized as even flow: of goods, data, capital, or individuals. Things function better, they are more useful and efficient, when they submit smoothly to this flow, when they shed their hard, idiosyncratic edges and enter the appropriate streams and channels of transportation without too much trouble or effort. The inner logic of smoothness is not just about reproducibility, with multiple indistinguishable tokens parading before us, differing only in their candy colors. It is also about translatability, the idea that anything and everything may be smoothly converted into a metalanguage of useful disposal and thus effortlessly transferred from one place, one data port, to another.

This easy flow invites more interruptions, more useless stoppages of goods and information. As Rem Koolhaas noticed two decades ago, it is really the traffic jams that reveal the delirious heart of a city, the unplanned [illegible] subverting all rational imperatives of movement. By the same token, breaks and irruptions in the flow of data remind us of the messy infrastructural conditions of our [illegible] precommitments and biases and class differences. Paradoxical statements, resistant to their [illegible] [illegible]

first time, in these clogged streets and broken
and luck and error, of exploitation and hype

LOST IN TRANSLATION

the graveled, leat

AN AMERICAN SENSIBILITY

During a recent visit I had to a visiting
class of eleven students, only to find, to my ut-
ter dismay, that nine of them had never heard
of Ryder. "Or maybe John Marin," I volun-
teered, "especially the way the water is ren-
hending blandness met my inquiry, my mad

These were purportedly serious students,
painting majors, seniors. I trotted out names of
other, more contemporary American artists and
Phillip Evergood, Reginald Marsh, Arthur
Nothing! I became frantic, randomly
a glimmer of acknowledging intelligence. I
He seems to filter through their dismal,
pragmatic, careerist consciousness. It's like
them. "It's as if," I exclaimed,



Hands, by Cornelius Vollenweider, whose vocal skill by [illegible] displays the [illegible]

A tall, square-jawed, stubble-faced student broke through my harangue with a smug challenge: "What do we need to know all that shit for?"

"You're right," I said. "And when you die I hope the world forgets you with the same ruthless dispatch."

The last student said that his work was outside, set up in the parking lot. The class and I ambled out to the chosen site at the far end of the lot, where no cars were parked, along a concrete slab that abutted, after a drop, the Light Rail tracks. Here his paintings were lined up. My first impression was that they were utterly without merit. No color, no light or atmosphere, no energy or painterly fracture or surface interest—simply an endless row of dumb primitive designs, banal shapes that were unrelieved by any sign of temperament or informing intelligence. Upon scrutiny, all the images seemed to be outlined in relief, clearly embossed operative tubing, sloppily applied, which, the student explained, contained dynamite. We were asked to step back. From each painting trailed a slim cord that networked into a metal box, around which we all stood in a huddle. With one sure gesture the student pushed down the handle that protruded from the top of the box, to explode the whole batch. Each painting went up in a separate puff of smoke. Against the creamy haze of the late afternoon sky it was a spectacular sight.

When the dust settled the emerging paintings had a presence that in their tattered state far outdid whatever predictions one might have made about the outcome, even if one had known the procedure in advance. They were powerful effigies of desecration, fraught with meanings that went deep into the psyche, uncompromising statements that mingled terror and despair. That such mediocre and substandard artistic fodder could be so transmuted into these compelling icons of modern angst was a great revelation to me. If there is such a thing as an "American sensibility" that incorporates waste and extravagance and obdurate macho ego, then perhaps it is the rebirth of the courage of this young culture, untutored and unmindful of its history, which [illegible] cultural clutch by throwing [illegible] anachronistic displays of foul, misplaced energy. Or perhaps the [illegible]

artistic sensibility inclines more to an engineering intelligence, proliferating a slew of monstrous, myriad-ish inventions to counter and fend off the sheer, blank epic scale of what once was thought to be an infinitely expandable frontier. Escaping the past like pioneers crossing the prairie where the relentless wind barely ripples the buffalo grass, the best of our artists still shoot from the hip.

[Primer]

DUBYA AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

A sampling of solecisms by Texas governor George W. Bush, from the Web site of The Progressive Review, *a bimonthly edited by Sam Smith. Smith is the author of* Sam Smith's Great American Political Repair Manual, *published by W. W. Norton.*

Ascribe: subscribe
Balkanize: vulcanize
Barriers: barriffs
Enthralling: inebriating
Greeks: Grecians
Handcuffs: cuff links
[illegible]
Perseverance: preservation
Pilloried: pillared
Presumptuous: presumptive
Slovenian: Slovokian
Subsidization: subsidation
Tactical weapons: tactful weapons
Tariffs: terriers
Tenets: tenants
Viable: vile

I'm from the West. I'm west of Texas. I'm going to [illegible] California. It's more civil than Washington, D.C., is close to California.

There needs to be debates, like we're going through. There needs to be town-hall meetings. [illegible]

The senator has got to understand if he's going to have—he can't have it both ways. He can't take the high horse and then claim the low road.

Will the highways on the Internet become toll [illegible] few?

I understand small-business growth. I was one.

If you're sick and tired of the politics of cynicism and polls and principles, come and join this campaign.

I know how hard it is for you to put food on your family.

We ought to make the pie higher.

I think we need not only to eliminate the tollbooth to the middle class, I think we should knock down the tollbooth.

Laura and I really don't realize how bright our children is sometimes until we get an objective analysis.

Reading is the basics for all learning.

Rarely is the question asked: Is our children learning?

How do you know if you don't measure if you have a system that simply suckles kids through?

The most important job is not to be governor, or first lady in my case.

This is still a dangerous world. It's a world of madmen and uncertainty and potential mental losses.

[Complaint]

WE'RE ALL SOCK PUPPETS NOW

From documents filed in April in a defamation and libel lawsuit brought by Pets.com against Robert Smigel, former head writer for Late Night with Conan O'Brien. *According to Pets.com, which is partially owned by Disney, in February, Smigel sent the company a letter alleging that its "spokespuppet" was based on his creation, Triumph the Insult Comic Dog.*

Pets.com, an Internet retailer of pet supplies, created a spokespuppet to be used in the company's national advertising campaign. The Pets.com puppet, created out of cotton sock material, is white with black spots and resembles a friendly dog. The Sock Puppet is the [illegible] pets and an advocate of pets, conveying to children and adults alike how pets feel about [illegible] variety of pet-related issues.

Since January 2000, Pets.com has sold an assortment of items, including T-shirts, caps, and pet-food bowls, bearing the Sock Puppet's distinctive and well-known image. In addition,



Buena Vista Social Club

The original million-selling Grammy Award winner and "world music album of the decade" *Rolling Stone*



Ibrahim Ferrer

Grammy-nominated solo effort by this 73-year-old golden-voiced bolero singer -"a masterpiece" *N.Y. Times*



Omara Portuondo

Just released -- Expressive ballads with theatrical flair from "the Edith Piaf of Cuba" featuring all the Cuban musicians from the original Buena Vista sessions



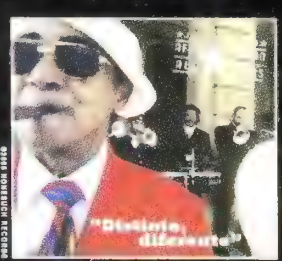
Rubén González

"A masterful and mischievous improvisational voice that epitomizes the dynamic Cuban piano tradition" *Jazz Times*



Compay Segundo

Classic ballads from the 92-year-old living legend of Cuban song, including the anthemic "Chan Chan"



Juan de Marcos' Afro-Cuban All Stars

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Puppet sang to Diane Sawyer). The Sock Pup-

in the advertisement, publicity, promotion, and marketing of Pets.com's products in the

ed by the Sock Puppet marketing

Triumph the Insult Comic Dog ("Triumph"), created and owned by Robert Smigel ("Defendant"), is a rubber dog that wears a gold often smokes a cigar, interacts with various live animals and with people, regularly uses vulgarity, insults both the humans and oth- around him, and often conducts physi- f a sexual nature on female dogs. Triumph has appeared on the television show n the Comedy Central network.

After the Pets.com Sock Puppet became a nationally recognized celebrity, Defendant began affiliating and aligning Triumph directly t the two separate char ters and suggested and dir Puppet from Defendant. Defendant has also Sock Puppet is "a watered- Triumph." Defendant has claimed a "similarity" and "resemblance" between the has claimed that the Pets of Triumph.

nd about women, and occa- undeth the Pets.com Sock severe

These statements impute dishonesty to Pets.com, accuse Pets.com of misconduct and theft, expose Pets.com to hatred, contempt, ridicule, and disgrace, and injure Pets.com's reputation in the community and nation.

Pets.com seeks such damages as the Court deems just and proper. .

[Story]

BROOMS

Walker Evans Unclassified: A Walker Evans Anthology, published by Scalo and the Art this year on the occasion of a retrospective of Evans's The story, which is part of the Metropoli- Walker Evans Archive, was found among Evans's papers dated New York, February 1929. It was previously unpublished.

A change in policy. Journal won't do. Have decided to continue but to omit dramas, crises, eruptions, explosions, simmerings, boilings, and all manifestations of the chaos of my inner life. Review before leave-taking: I am full of hate; have wanderlust not only in spring; am emotionally entrenched in ghastly life, and love it; am alone; have soul, to which I hereby bid farewell.

Without work this place I simply couldn't live in. Couldn't buy anything. Sold, in fact, books, cameras; pawned watch. There was no broom until I found one in the alley back of the demolished factory. It had a triangular shape. (I didn't know anything about brooms.) I carried it home and swept bitterly.

But I shall eliminate dates. But I shall go on writing. Every night I shall sit down and write something that hasn't anything to do with my inner life.

Haaga the grocer has a sale of brooms.

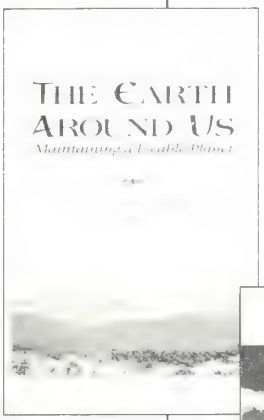
I don't mind the cold. I don't mind anything. I am detached. I walk along the street in the sunlight, with something to do; something connected with my inner life, and therefore unmentionable. Divine power of thought. I forget what it is I have to do. Left stranded on upper Bway in this condition.

I know I ought to buy a broom. There are times when I actually could buy a broom, financially. But nothing has ever come of it, finally.

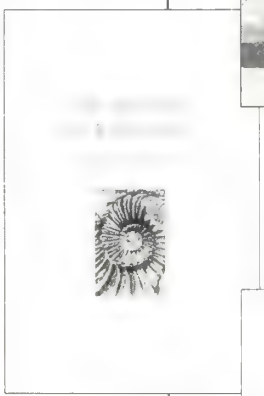
Off to Singapore. She a poem on 14th St. a long green dress and a long cigarette

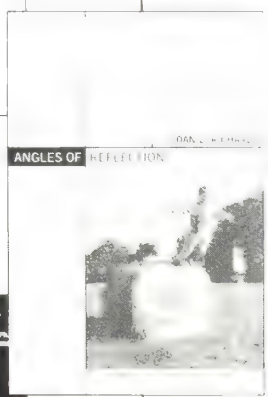
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Niles Eldredge
"[illegible] an truly call significant, but this one is such . . . [Eldr[illegible] uses his unparal eled gifts of synthesis to weave together an [illegible]rdinary diversity of information into a single coherent [illegible]"

■ **ANGLES OF REFLECTION**
Logic and a Mother's Love
Joan L. Richards
"A gifted writer, Richards is at her best in describing her fears for [illegible]n and the conflicting demands of career and motherhood. Her memoir is an exceptionally articulate study of how we deal [illegible] cannot control."

■ **CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING**
The Nature of Memory
Susan Engel
"*Context is Everything* is a fascinating, in-depth [illegible] ous workings of memory, the kind of thing [illegible] his hand at if he were less the novelist, more t[illegible]
W. D. Wethere[illegible]
A Celebration of [illegible]
N[illegible]

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[illegible]

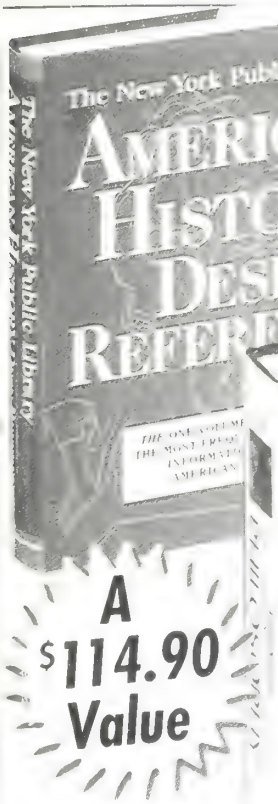
[Queries]

ALONE, DEPRESSED, GERMAN

[Queries]

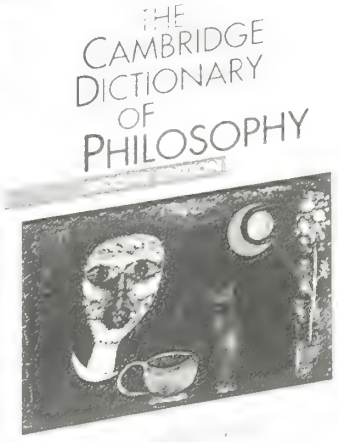
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I've noticed that my Caucasian neighbors spend a lot more time on lawn care. Do Caucasians see lawn care as basic home maintenance, or is it more of a hobby?

Why does it seem that Caucasians, more than other races, enjoy flirting with death by engaging in extreme sports such as skydiving, bungee jumping, mountain climbing, and car and speedboat racing?

Why is it that when meeting white people for the first time in a social setting, within five minutes they ask you what you do for a living?

A white friend told me that no subjects of an intimate nature (money, affection, etc.) were discussed in her home. Is this typical in white households?

I am a black male who takes the time to iron my clothes every day. For some reason, my white co-workers find this interesting. Why is it that white people do not iron their clothing?

Why do most black people wear their hats backwards? I have tried this many times, and I just don't think that is comfortable.

Do black people not have pets as much as other races?

I have noticed that some black men drive in a fully reclined position, their heads barely showing above the steering wheel. It seems like a strange, dangerous thing to do. Is it a gang thing, or simply fashionable?

Why do some African Americans name their children such hard-to-pronounce and -spell names? It seems to me that some of these would be a drawback later in life, when one enters the real world.

I am a recruiter and meet a great number of college-educated professionals. Why do white prospects with marginal qualifications assume they are extremely qualified for a position, while black applicants with better qualifications remain excellent choices?

[illegible] I've never been to [illegible] more than I know how to play chess. I wonder if white people believe blacks don't play [illegible] and [illegible] how blacks [illegible] played it at all.

[illegible] Why do women [illegible] they own [illegible] Why do [illegible] Why do women [illegible] Why do [illegible] Why do [illegible] Why do

important aspect, yet it's the most unscientific, the most difficult to learn. All I can tell you is, play by certain rules and don't bend them and don't change them.

When you have a juror that you obviously like, just by their appearance, you lead them, just as you lead them in a cross-examination. You don't say, "Ma'am, would your having been a victim of a crime have any effect on you?" because she may say, "Yes," and that's not the answer you want. So you say, "Ma'am, you indicated that you were robbed at knifepoint. Now of course that wouldn't have any effect on your deciding whether this guy is innocent or guilty, because that has nothing to do with your incident, right?" So she feels like a jerk and looks like a fool if she says, "Well, yeah, it might bother me." So, with a juror that you like, you want to put them in that situation.

But if it's somebody that looks like they're a defendant themselves you say, "Well, sir, the fact that your brother was killed in a violent crime, that terrible trauma that happened to you might affect you in deciding whether this guy is guilty or not, right?" And he goes, "Yeah, it might, come to think of it." So it's important that you make it easy for the ones that you hate to get out.

Another question you always want to ask is what section of the city they live in. I mean, let's be honest, people that live in North Philly have a different perspective on law enforcement and government than people in Somerton or Chestnut Hill. People from Mayfair are good, and people from Thirty-third and Diamond stink. Get to know that. I mean, Thirty-third and Diamond sounded like a nice neighborhood when I first moved here, but you don't want any jurors from Thirty-third and Diamond. So be familiar with the city.

Case law says that the object of selecting a jury is to get one that's competent, fair, and impartial. Well, that's ridiculous. You're not trying to get that. If you go in there thinking you're some noble civil libertarian, you'll lose. You're there to win, and the only way to do that is to get jurors that are unfair and likely to convict. And if you think that it's some noble thing, that it's some esoteric game, you're wrong.

Let's face it, blacks from the low-income areas are less likely to convict. There is a resentment of law enforcement, there's a resentment of authority, and, as a result, you don't want those people on your jury. And it may appear as if you're being racist or whatnot, but you are just being realistic.

If you take well-dressed, middle-class people, you're going to do well. It's that simple. Look at their dress, how they act. Most jurors bring a book to read. Look at their book. If the guy is reading Karl Marx [illegible] your common sense [illegible] good or a police [illegible] person, because [illegible] tuned [illegible]

You do not want [illegible] could ask everyone [illegible] their IQ you could [illegible] time. You don't want smart people, because smart people will [illegible] case. They take those words "reasonable doubt" and actually try to think about them. You don't want people who are going to think about your case and analyze it. You want people who are going to say, "If they say she did it, she did it." You don't want the town idiot either, but you want something in the middle—plain, simple people.

I pick juries quickly—it could be 1 don't hesitate, because I've got these rules down. You've got to stay with these basic rules.

Another factor in selecting blacks is, you

[Appreciation]

THE GREAT-GRANDFATHER OF SOUL

[illegible] Lance Pitzer [illegible] Who are your favorite [illegible] put it [illegible] the Vitamin C Rollin' Stones [illegible] their millennium issue. Strom Thurmond, the nineteen [illegible] Republican [illegible] with Carolina [illegible] project [illegible] 1948 [illegible] Dixiecrat [illegible] to protect [illegible] their [illegible] claims that [illegible] Jews to force the Southern people [illegible] Negro race into our theaters, into our swimming pools, into our homes, and into our churches."

Senator Strom Thurmond has been able to stay afloat all these years, and he's great for our country. There's somebody there who knows everything, and that's very important. When the young whippersnappers get out of line, whether Democrat or Republican, an old man can walk up and say, "Wait a minute, son, it goes this way." And that's [illegible] He's like a grandfather [illegible] grandfathers. He's [illegible] know what I'm saying. We [illegible] spect.

Another [illegible] would be John F. Kennedy.



times in the jury selection process. And if you lose track or you're not sure of what's been said, you can always take a recess. You can say, "Judge, I have to go to the bathroom." You can go out and check out what's left.

I'm sure you're all familiar with *Batson v. Kentucky*. It's the case where the guy was convicted of rape down in Kentucky and was tried by an all white jury because the prosecutor had struck all blacks. They ruled that it was not due process. In the future, we're all going to have to be aware of that, and the best way to avoid any problems is to protect yourself. My advice is that when you do have a black jury, question them at length. And mark something down that you can articulate at a later time if something happens, because only after a prima facie showing can the trial judge order you to show why you're not striking them on a racial basis.

Have them marked down so if the judge does come to you and says, "What about it, McMahon?" you can say, "Judge, these are my reasons, and I have them marked down here."

You want to ask more questions of these people so that you have more ammunition to make an articulable reason as to why you are not striking them for race.

So, ah, that's how to pick a jury.

[Damages]

I KNOW WHY THE CAJUN BIRD SINGS

From a U.S. Justice Department report released in February on abuse at the Lincoln Hall Juvenile Center in Jena, Louisiana, an eighteen-month-old private prison owned by Wackenhut Corrections Corporation. In March the Justice Department named Wackenhut in a lawsuit alleging [illegible] at least a dozen youths [illegible] whether boys could "wear Wonder Woman underwear under the guise of treatment." Last year Wackenhut lost a $12 million prison contract and was fined $925 [illegible] monitoring. [illegible] prison. Twelve former employees [illegible] sexual abuse at prisons [illegible] are pending regarding abuse allegations. Wackenhut, the world's [illegible] operates [illegible] that runs [illegible].

Use of force by staff against a youth with a colostomy caused [illegible] of the colostomy hole, creating a risk of trauma or infection [illegible] thereby exposed to the outside world.

A nurse called [illegible] another nurse at the facility [illegible] tenderly accept the well [illegible] on them" and refused to [illegible] mechanism if they don't act right. [illegible] ment then indicated that even a [illegible] investigation was conducted.

A counselor sent a note to a nurse that a youth had reported that he was [illegible] and [illegible] another youth, and when he told the staff they told him to hit the other youth over the head with a [illegible].

A youth developed a bleeding ulcer and repeatedly vomited blood. A physician obtained a positive *H. pylori* test but instructed the youth with an [illegible] antibiotic. The youth still has not received a definitive treatment.

A report states that a youth "had been restrained very violently and [illegible] with his face being purple and blue." The incident occurred twice, and both times the staff failed to call 911. However, interviewed [illegible] self-harm threats and actions as a way to "get off the dorm." He described Jena as a dangerous place with [illegible] to [illegible] for [illegible] and [illegible].

A youth reportedly complained of [illegible] with headaches and blood pressure of 150/[illegible]. Initially the nurse failed to [illegible] the pressure, and no treatment was provided for hypertension. High pressures with headache indicate risk of seizure or stroke from malignant hypertension. Finally, [illegible] physician, who did not evaluate for underlying causes but did start treatment to reduce blood pressure. At a follow-up visit, his blood pressure was [illegible] still inappropriately elevated, and the physician noted only "[illegible] hypertension well controlled." Inadequate treatment subjects the patient to long-term complications of [illegible].

Several youths reported that they witnessed an [illegible] verbally harass a [illegible] regarding a snack for his special diabetic diet. They stated that they were afraid for the youth.

The [illegible] received a report from the Project Zero Tolerance Hotline indicating that a [illegible] allegations [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

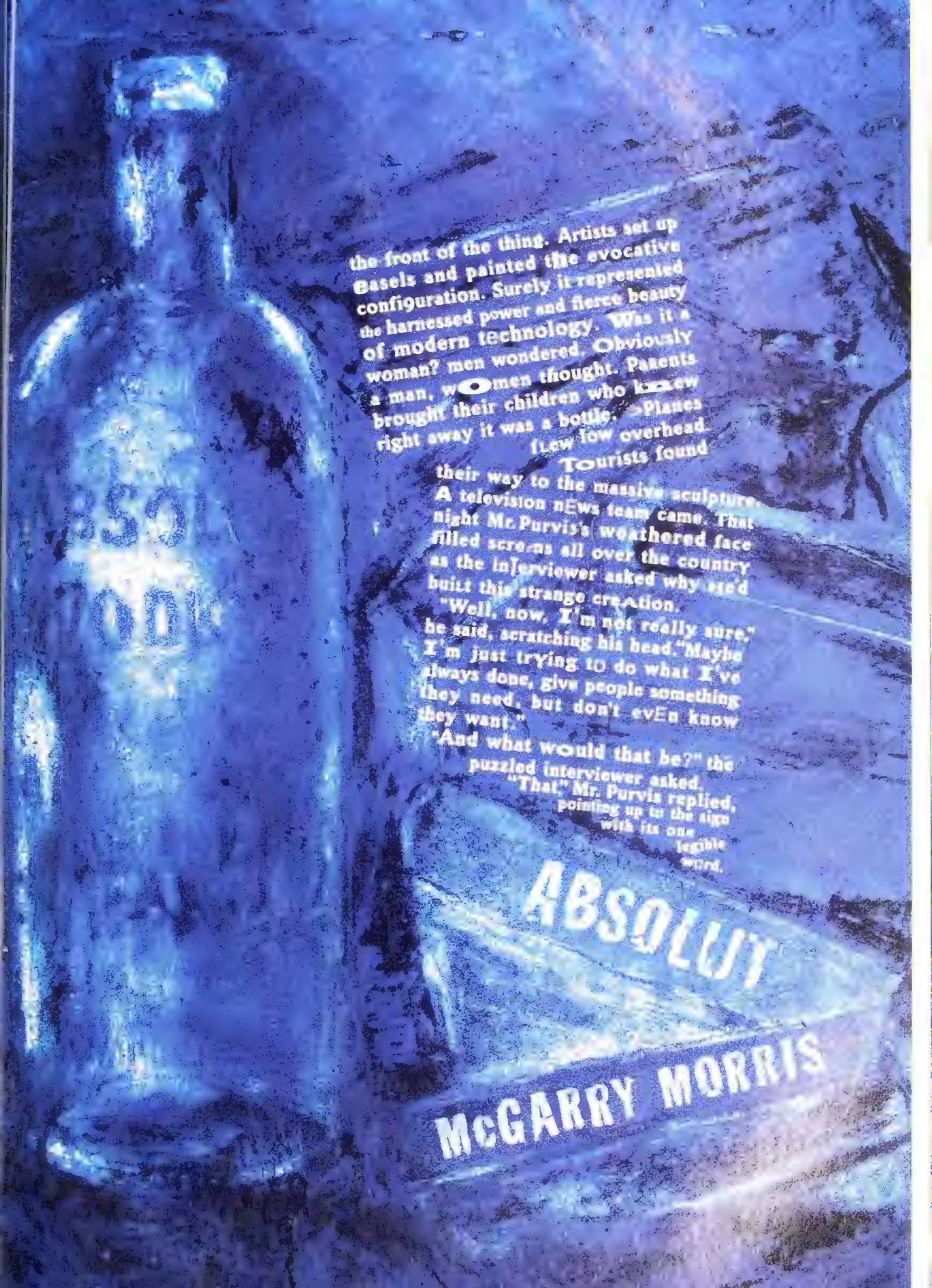
"Useless, useless, senseless junk,"

FOR 55 YEARS that sign had been nailed to the old fence. Because the junk yard was right in the center of town, Mr. Purvis tried to keep the place as neat as a junk yard can be. If all a person needed was a clutch for a broken down washing machine, Mr. Purvis would scratch his head and move slowly through the lot, even though he knew exactly where to find it. The trick was to give customers plenty of time to browse through the piles. That way they left with things they hadn't even known they needed: a busted window fan, a claw-footed bath tub, dented tin pails. It was an art, Mr. Purvis thought, to take what one person didn't want and match it up with someone who did.

But as the years passed, time was money and people couldn't afford to spend much of either tinkering with balky lawnmowers or sludgy oil burners. Sales dwindled, but Mr. Purvis continued to haul in junk. His rusting piles grew higher and wider. Sometimes now a week went by without a single sale. Sometimes two weeks. Under the weight of so much junk, the decrepit fence sagged out over the sidewalk. The sign fell into the weeds, and a passerby propped it against the fence. One day Mr. Purvis's spirits soared as a crowd bustled through the gate. They were from the Downtown Beautification Committee. They declared the old man's property a public hazard. It wasn't a valid business, but an eyesore. It gave people a poor impression of the town. Even his peeling sign made no sense. Of the original lettering, only one word was left: ABSOLUT.

With the committee gone, Mr. Purvis roamed dazedly through the lot. "Useless! Useless, senseless junk," he muttered, dragging pipes and storm window frames and sinks into a heap to clear the edges of his property. To keep the rickety pile from shifting, Mr. Purvis lashed it all together with metal wire. Its silvery glow in the sunlight could be seen for miles around. At first he worked from ladders, then from staging. The last piece in place was a thirty-foot length of aluminum pipe that made the towering conglomeration the tallest structure in town.

People were mystified. They slowed way down as they drove by. The newspaper ran a picture of Mr. Purvis hoisting his sign on to


the front of the thing. Artists set up
easels and painted the evocative
configuration. Surely it represented
the harnessed power and fierce beauty
of modern technology. Was it a
woman? men wondered. Obviously
a man, women thought. Parents
brought their children who knew
right away it was a bottle. Planes
flew low overhead.
Tourists found
their way to the massive sculpture.
A television news team came. That
night Mr. Purvis's weathered face
filled screens all over the country
as the interviewer asked why he'd
built this strange creation.
"Well, now, I'm not really sure,"
he said, scratching his head. "Maybe
I'm just trying to do what I've
always done, give people something
they need, but don't even know
they want."
"And what would that be?" the
puzzled interviewer asked.
"That," Mr. Purvis replied,
pointing up to the sign
with its one
legible
word,
ABSOLUT
McGARRY MORRIS

time all have not been abused." The youth has an I.Q. of 61. There is no indication in the file that even a preliminary investigation was conducted.

The center received a letter from the mother of a youth stating that "a white female guard forced [her son] to remove [his] shirt and slither like a snake a long distance."

A counselor filed a complaint that she witnessed an officer falsely charging a youth with masturbating and giving him a ticket while stating, "You try to beat that, motherfucker."

Nine youths wrote a statement "reporting Sgt. [illegible] for eating off our trays every sigal dining hall, one time sgt jb took two trays . . . he taks pepos snaks and saying we have no more but i saw him . . . and he said 'Sgts. come first.'" The grievance was rejected because the youths did not start their statement with the phrase "this is a request for administrative relief."

A youth put a belt around his neck and tied it to his intake cell door. He was sprayed with a "one-second burst of Freeze Plus." A disciplinary report was written up in which he was found "guilty." Later he cut his wrist, for which he was issued a disciplinary ticket. Use of tickets in such clinical situations is antitherapeutic.

A youth alleged that he had been "choked out" and raped. His medical file states, "It appears that he is being victimized by some of his peers." He cut his forearm with a belt buckle, for which he was sentenced to fifteen days' loss of both canteen and telephone. Later he did self-harm to his testicles "in order to be housed in medical" for which his sentence was thirty days' loss of canteen. One self-harm episode was documented by photographs of the youth [illegible] on the concrete floor of a cell, his hands behind his back, blood spattered on the [illegible].

A youth [illegible] were released in an enclosed dormitory area, despite warnings on the grenade stating "for outdoor use only. May re[illegible] in doors." Many residents were dressed only in underwear for [illegible] were forced to the floor on their stomachs with their hands [illegible] approximately five hours. Several youths were moved back into the gas, purportedly to punish them for talking, and several were sprayed with Deep Freeze aerosol restraint, causing violent asthmatic reactions and second-degree burns in at [illegible].

[Story]

THE WOODCUTTER

By David Means. To Assorted Fire Events, to be published in September by Context Books

The first day back he began chopping like a maniac, going at the wood day and night—or so they say. He'd been back six years when I was old enough to notice him, and by that time he went a bit slower (at least that's what I was told) but still split a good cord, a full cord, in about two hours, depending on what kind of wood it was and how large the tree was; he had a gas-powered wedge that halved the logs; then he threw them into place and took a good hard swap, usually just one chop was all it took, and then he'd swish them out of the way with his steel-toed boots and do another; all day, most days, seven days a week, barring only the worst kind of weather. When he stopped, there were usually dewdrops of sweat and condensation on his black beard; in cold weather, a dangling clot of ice; in the summer, there were fine little braids of red welts under the hairs and just above the skin. Prickly heat. The lumberjack shirt he wore, traditional red-and-black Pendleton of good wool, graced him deep into summer. When he killed himself—August 1, 1985—he was in the shirt, next to a fresh cord of oak stacked against his garage. His wife was out there undoing the buttons slowly to get to the wound, small and round, produced by a Teflon-coated bullet (the papers said) that eased neatly into his chest and right out, the wonders of moon-shot technology going a step further than nonstick pans (my father muttered). Theories abounded about the exact reason, but suicide being an unexplainable enigma, it didn't take much to put most of it on Nam, on his role in the siege at Khe Sanh, on buddies lost, although the papers mentioned he was being sued for taking down a red maple on private property without permission, going right up the Jansons' driveway (a washed gravel loop to the front of their cedar-sided ranch), tying a rope around the tree, then his pickup hook, getting the chain saw revved up, telling me to ease up on the clutch when he gave a shout (being only fourteen, I wasn't versed in the workings of a manual shift, but I did as I was told, easing up slowly, and the truck jerked back, and the tree went down behind me with a loud, dust-clouded whomp). Before I was out of the truck's cab, he was slicing into the trunk, getting right into the heart of the tree, which was a good 120 years old according to my ring count (later). I kept quiet about my role in his demise. It wouldn't do to let people know that maybe it wasn't Nam that caused him

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to shoot a nice, neat hole in his heart, and that maybe it was just other stuff: the value of trees being dissembled, the wonderful easing up of weight when the head of the axe left the arch and pulled him into the chop (I'd watched a million times). The threat of not being able to go into the yards of his neighbors, or the local parks where he got most of the trees, to take down excess growth, was too much for him. His lumberjack days were numbered.

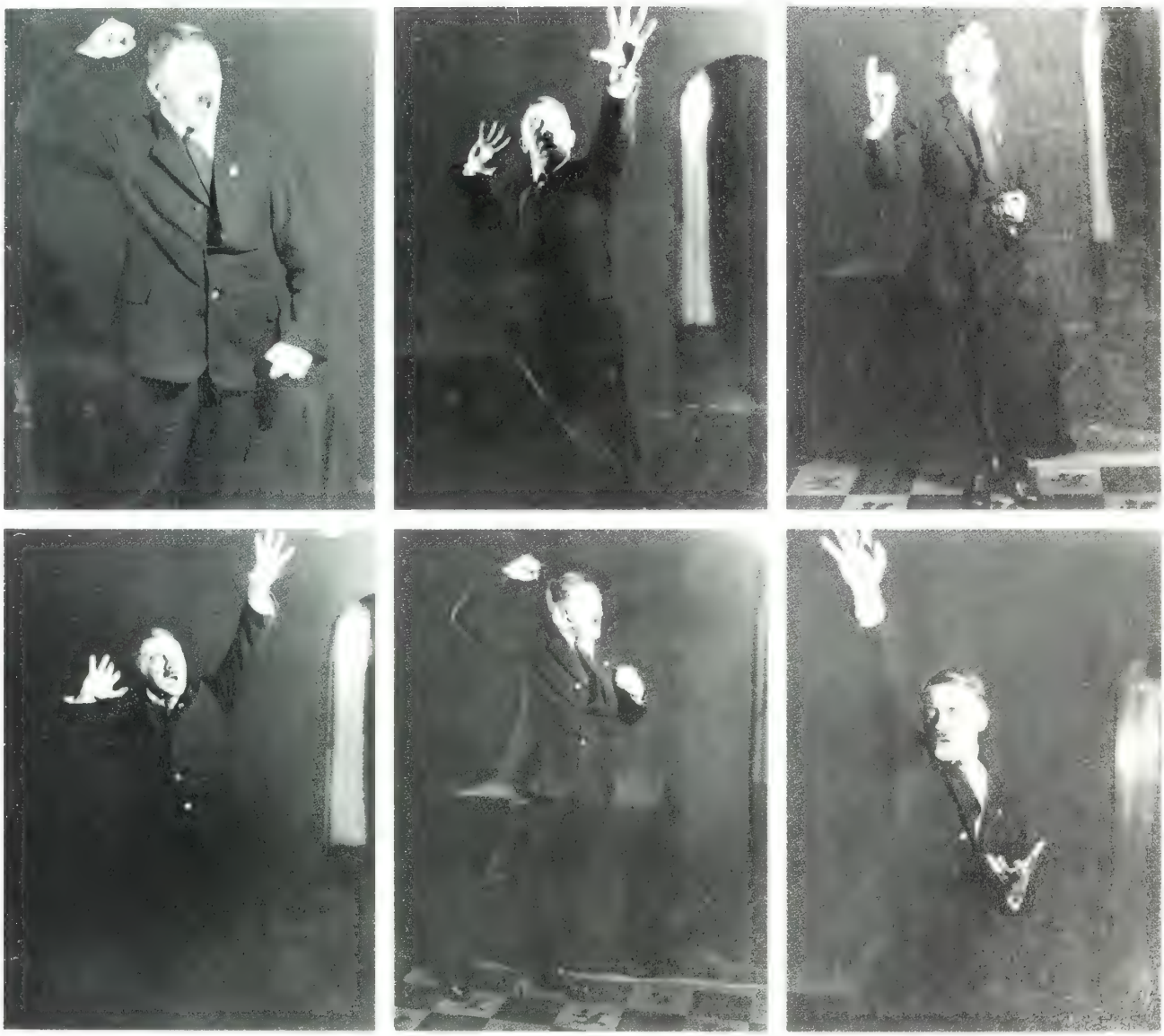
[Poem]

TO WORLD WAR TWO

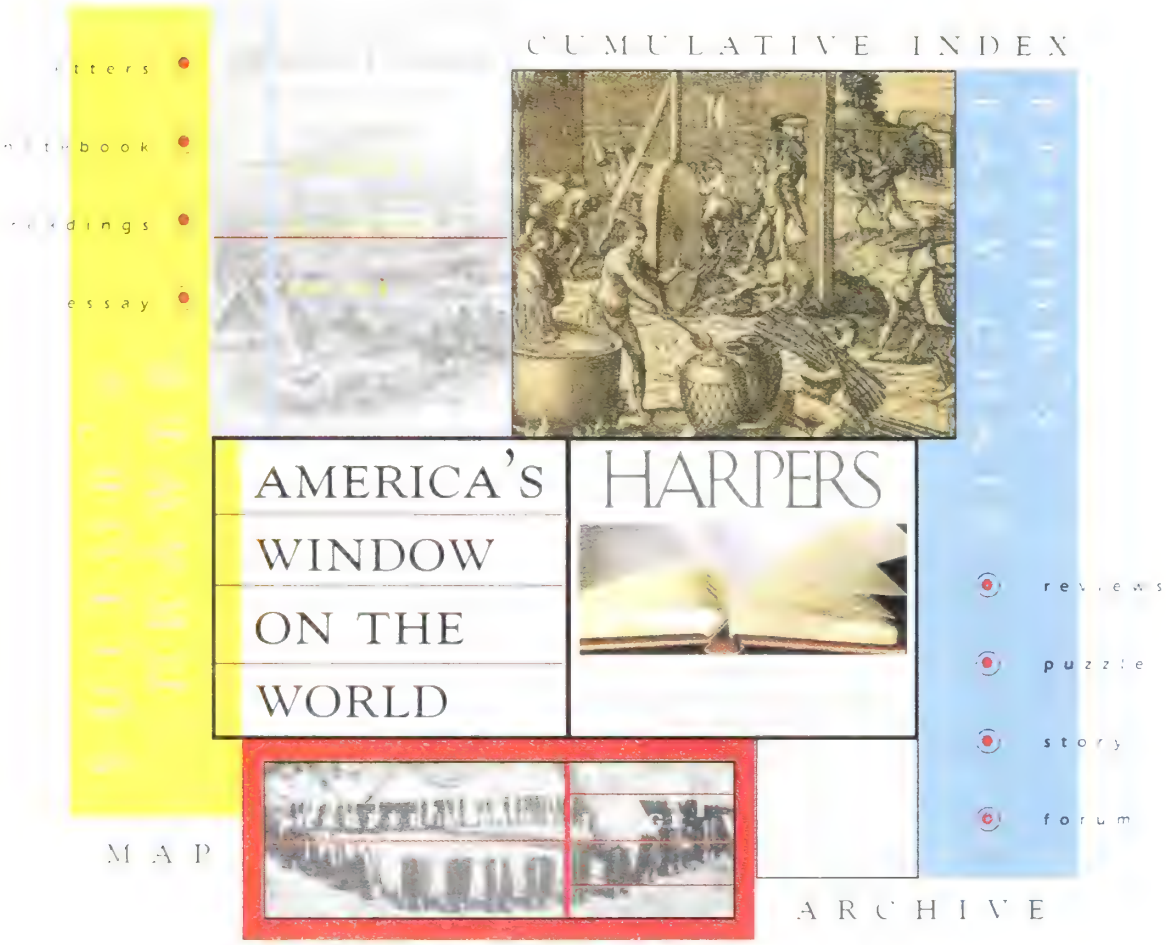
By Kenneth Koch in New Addresses, *published in April by Alfred A. Knopf*

Early on you introduced me to young women in bars
You were large, and with a large hand
You presented them in different cities,
Made me in San Luis Obispo, drunk
On French seventy-fives, in Los Angeles, on pousse-cafés.
It was a time of general confusion
Of being a body hurled at a wall.
I didn't do much fighting. I sat, rather I stood, in a foxhole.
I stood while the typhoon splashed us into morning.
It felt unusual
Even if for a good cause
To be part of a destructive force
With my rifle in my hands
And in my head
My serial number
The ultimate object of my existence
To exterminate Japanese soldiers
By killing them
With a rifle or with a grenade
And then, many years after that,
I could write poetry
Fall in love
Have a daughter
Go to Paris
Write these things
From a great distance
If I survived
I was getting to be left
Behind
Killer. It wasn't
Like anything I'd done
Before, on the paved
Streets of Cincinnati
Or in the ballroom
At Mr. Vathé's dancing class
What would Anne Marie Goldsmith
Have thought of me
If instead of asking her to dance
I had put my BAR to my shoulder
And shot her in the face
I thought about her in my foxhole—
One, in a foxhole near me, has his throat cut during the night
We take more precautions but it is night and it is you.
The typhoon continues and so do you.
"I can't be killed—because of my poetry. I have to live on in order to write it."
I thought—even crazier thought, or just as crazy—
"If I'm killed while thinking of lines, it will be too corny
When it's reported" (I imagined it would be reported!)
So I kept thinking of lines of poetry. One that came to me on the beach in Leyte
Was "The surf comes in like masochistic lions."
I loved this terrible line. It was keeping me alive. My Uncle Leo wrote to me,
"You won't believe this, but someday you may wish
You were footloose and twenty on Leyte again." I have never wanted
To be on Leyte again,
With you, whispering into my ear,
"Go on and win me! Tomorrow you may not be alive,
So do it today!" How could anyone ever win you?
How many persons would I have had to kill
Even to begin to be a part of winning you?
You were too much for me, though I
Was older than you were and in camouflage. But for you
Who threw everything together, and had all the systems
Working for you all the time, this was trivial. If you could use me
You'd use me, and then forget. How else
Did I think you'd behave?
I'm glad you ended. I'm glad I didn't die. Or lose my mind.
As machines make ice
We made dead enemy soldiers, in
Dark jungle alleys, with weapons in our hands
That produced fire and kept going straight through
I was carrying one.
I who had gone about for years as a child
Praying God don't let there ever be another war
Or if there is, don't let me be in it. Well, I was in you.
All you cared about was existing and being won.
You died of a bomb blast in Nagasaki, and there were parades

[Rehearsal]
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RUNNING DRY

What happens when the world no longer has enough freshwater?

BY JACQUES LESLIE

In the world there is nothing more submissive and weak than water. Yet for attacking that which is hard and strong nothing can surpass it.
—Lao-tzu (sixth century B.C.)

When I was a war correspondent twenty-five years ago, I paid more attention to blood than to water. Carnage transfixed and terrified me; water seemed to flow inconsequentially through the embattled landscape before me. The Mekong River, in its multifingered brownness, and the reverse-flowing, hugely contracting and expanding great Cambodian lung-lake, the Tonle Sap, barely registered on my psyche, except as obstacles: my thoughts on water consisted chiefly of military observations, such as that the onset of the rainy season slowed down Khmer Rouge advances more effectively than the regime's hapless human enemies did. I can't say when the pendulum began to swing—probably about the time I stopped thinking about the war, a decade or two later. More recently, I started to notice how many news stories involved water. The subjects weren't just hurricanes, droughts, and floods but less predictable phenomena, such as the accelerating destruction of U.S. watersheds caused by urban sprawl, violent protests in Bolivia prompted by a water-utility-rate increase, and a death sentence handed down to a Chinese administrator who embezzled nearly $2 million set aside for the resettlement of people displaced by Three Gorges Dam. I began reading every water text I could find, and in March I attended an international water conference in The Hague at which water ministers from 115 countries declined to agree on how to address the problem of water scarcity. Now when I envision the globe, I try to see beyond political boundaries to the world as it really is: a collection of watersheds, lakes, rivers, and aquifers that together maintain the earth's biota—which is to say, us. Now the world's quotidian skirmishes and conflagrations are mere background noise. Now it is water that scares me.

We face an unassailable fact: we are running out of freshwater. In the last century we humans have so vastly expanded our use of water to meet the needs of industry, agriculture, and a burgeoning population that now, after thousands of years in which water has been plentiful and virtually free, its scarcity threatens the supply of food, human health, and global ecosystems. With global population hurtling toward roughly 9 billion people by 2050, projections suggest that if we continue consuming water with our habitual disregard all those needs cannot be met at once.

The world's supply of freshwater remains roughly constant, at about 2½ percent of all water, and of that, almost two thirds is stored in ice caps and glaciers, inaccessible to humans; what must change is how we use the available supply. Humans have grown so numerous that the usual response to anticipated water scarcity—to increase supply with dams, aqueducts, canals, and wells—is beginning to push against an absolute limit.

In the developed world widespread water shortages are projected but not yet broadly experi-

Jacques Leslie is the author of The Mark: A War Correspondent's Memoir of Vietnam & Cambodia, *published in 1995. He is working on a book about water.*

enced. In the developing world the crisis has already arrived. As many as 1.2 billion people—one [illegible]—lack access to clean drinking water. Nearly 3 billion live without sanitation: no underground sewage, toilets, or even [illegible] million people every year die of easily preventable waterborne diseases such as diarrhea, dysentery, and cholera; in fact, most [illegible] in the developing world is water related. [illegible] in *The World's Water 1998–1999*, "For nearly three billion people, access to a sanitation system comparable to that of ancient Rome would be a significant improvement in their quality of life."

To be sure, the water shortages that give rise to these conditions so far are regional, not global, and often involve inequality of distribution and high pollution levels as much as absolute scarcity. Thus one water basin experiences a shortage while neighboring basins enjoy ample supplies. Water doesn't ship well, except in unusual circumstances, such as the provisioning of some Greek and Caribbean islands by tanker or barge: water is far too cheap and unwieldy to justify long-distance transport. This tends to keep shortages confined to specific areas, but it also means that they can't easily be alleviated with water from another region.

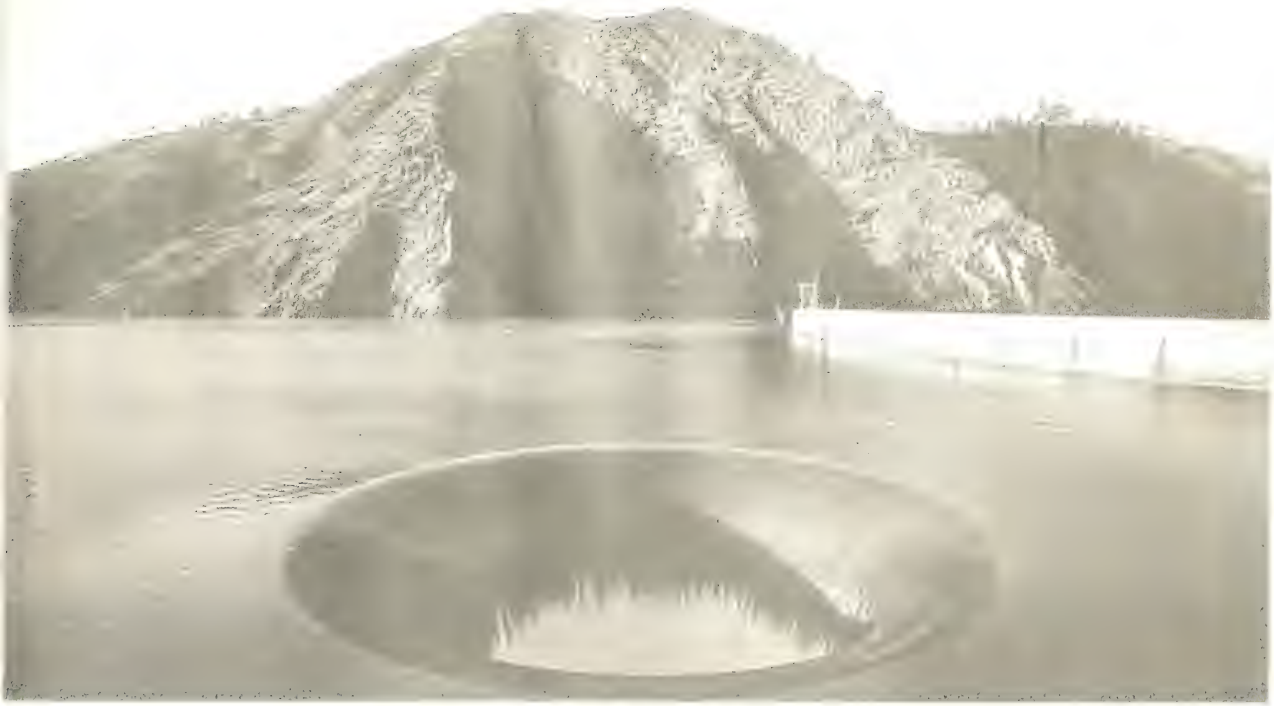
In one way, however, the impact of water shortages has already registered globally, thanks to water's role in agricultural production. Indeed, water experts refer to grain as "virtual water," since many countries facing water shortages respond by importing grain. It takes roughly a thousand [illegible] to produce one ton of grain, so importing grain has an obvious shipping advantage. As a result, stockpiling grain is one way to counter water shortages. The billion-dollar question among water and agriculture experts, in fact, is whether, owing in part to water scarcity, the human race in the [illegible] century will lose the capacity to feed itself. For now, the answer is unknowable, since predictions inevitably rest on highly speculative assumptions. One forecaster, Lester Brown of the Washington, D.C.–based Worldwatch Institute, [illegible] much [illegible] international grain market, inducing widespread starvation. More plausibly, others argue that in many developing countries water scarcity is the most significant component of environmental degradation, which in turn is an underlying cause of mass migration, peasant revolt, and urban insurrection. Such notions have not escaped the attention of U.S. policymakers, as evidenced by meetings of officials from the Department of Defense, the CIA, the State Department, and the White House last September to consider the global implications of water conflicts. At a time when the First World is obsessed with computer technology, genetics, and the froth of media entertainments, we would be well advised to remember our relationship to the two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen that, bound in nature, support all life.

At a time when the First World is obsessed with [illegible] we would be well advised to remember that [illegible]

IRRIGATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

In the Tigris-Euphrates, Indus, and Yellow river basins, ancient civilizations flourished when they devised ways to grow crops with irrigated water and foundered when the systems collapsed, either because sediment clogged their canals or waterborne salt poisoned their soils. We like to think that we've mastered irrigation—indeed, in the last two centuries humans have increased land under irrigation thirtyfold. Yet the daunting obstacles we face in maintaining irrigation systems are not so different from those that brought down the Sumerian and Indus civilizations. "The overriding lesson from history is that most irrigation-based civilizations fail," writes Sandra Postel in her compelling survey of the global water crisis, *Pillar of Sand: Can the Irrigation Miracle Last?* "As we enter the third millennium A.D., the question is: Will ours be any different?"

Now, more than ever, humans depend on irrigation: less than a fifth of the world's cropland is irrigated, but because irrigation typically enables higher yields and two or three crops a year, irrigated land produces two fifths of the world's food. Even so, the planet's reliance on irrigated crops undoubtedly will intensify in the coming decades. The world's food supply comes from three major sources: cropland, rangeland, and fisheries. Livestock have already grown so numerous that 20 percent of the earth's rangeland has lost productivity because of overgrazing, and most of the world's fisheries have been decimated by overfishing. By default, the likely source of food for the roughly 3 billion additional humans expected in the next fifty years will be cropland. Yet the amount of cropland is not likely to grow much: newly cultivated land probably will barely surpass the amount of land lost to agriculture because of erosion, urbanization, and salination. Moreover, the best cropland is already in use; much of the land still awaiting



percent since then. Projections by international agencies suggest that by 2020, per capita irrigated land will have dropped 17 percent from its 1978 peak. Success in feeding all the people who will populate the earth in the mid-twenty-first century depends largely on increasing the productivity of existing cropland. "The difference between the Malthusian pessimists and the cornucopian optimists," says Postel, "comes down to little more than an assumption about grainland productivity over the next several decades—specifically, whether yields will grow at closer to the 1 percent rate of the 1990s or the 2 percent rate of the previous four decades."

There's reason to worry. The 2 percent rate occurred as farmers applied Green Revolution technologies to land irrigated by groundwater or reservoirs, but those techniques have largely fulfilled their promise, and yields in recent years have either stagnated or declined. One reason may be irrigation itself: some scientists believe that soils become depleted when repeatedly subjected to the two or three annual crops that irrigation enables. In addition, Green Revolution agriculture depends on copious applications not just of pesticides and fertilizer but of water: between 1950 and 1995 grainland productivity increased

creased 220 percent. With global depletion of groundwater and increasing diversions of agricultural water for industrial, urban, and envi-

people may hunger for relatively less food.

UNSEEN LAKES, PUMPED DRY

Compared with the earth's visible freshwater—in lakes, ponds, and rivers—the amount of water stored in underground aquifers is sixty times as large. A stock that immense might seem beyond our capacity to ex- being depleted at an unsustainable rate. The Ogallala Aquifer, one of the world's largest stores of groundwater, covers 225,000 square miles beneath parts of eight U.S. states, from Texas to South Dakota, and feeds a fifth of the nation's irrigated lands. Although its stock is "fossil wa- being depleted so rapidly that many farmers who significantly lowering yield. The amount of acreage decade; despite efforts to limit use of Ogallala water, substantial withdrawals continue.

Of course, unlike the Ogallala, most aquifers are naturally "recharged"—replenished by rain and runoff—but even these are being depleted dramatically, as the rate of withdrawal easily surpasses the recharged amount. India's volume of annual groundwater overdraft is higher than any other nation's. Almost everywhere in the country, water withdrawals are proceeding at double the rate of recharge, causing a drop in aquifers of three to ten feet per year; in the state of Tamil Nadu, groundwater levels have dropped as much as ninety-nine feet since the 1970s, and some aquifers there have become useless. The cost of land subsidence caused by aquifer depletion in the United States is about $400 million per year, with incidents occurring in Houston, New Orleans, and California's Santa Clara County and San Joaquin valley; Beijing is sinking at an annual rate of about four inches a year; and certain Mexico City barrios sink as much as a foot a year. In both Florida and the Indian state of Gujarat, the water table has dropped so low that seawater has invaded the aquifers, limiting their usefulness for drinking or irrigation. In Palestine's Gaza Strip, which relies almost entirely on groundwater, saltwater intrusion from the Mediterranean has been detected as far as a mile inland, and some experts predict that the aquifer will become totally salinized. Groundwater depletion, says the International Water Management Institute, a World Bank–supported group in Sri Lanka, is "the single most serious problem in the entire field of water resources management. . . . Many of the most populous countries of the world—China, India, Pakistan, Mexico and nearly all of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa—have literally been having a free ride over the past two or three decades by depleting their groundwater resources. The penalty of mismanagement of this valuable resource is now coming due, and it is no exaggeration to say that the results could be catastrophic for these countries, and, given their importance, for the world as a whole."



Di Bin well, North Yemen

Humans alone cannot deplete aquifers: we lack the strength to draw that much water or dig wells that deep. Rather, groundwater depletion is a phenomenon of the late twentieth century, made possible by the availability of electricity and cheap pumps. IWMI calls the spread of small pump sets throughout the world "one of the most dramatic yet generally unappreciated revolutions in water resource technology." In some ways pump irrigation is ideal: the water is stored underground and shielded from evaporation so it can be used during the dry season when crops need water most. In many Asian countries pump irrigation alone deserves much of the credit for high Green Revolution yields.

Yet in many countries the new technology shattered traditional water-sharing arrangements that had worked for centuries. John Briscoe, a senior water adviser at the World Bank, cites the example of Yemen, which once had "very sophisticated ancient water management techniques" that handled everything from floods to water allocation. "Then you come to the post–Second World War, with deep wells and electricity and diesel pumps for groundwater, and people pump like there's no tomorrow. You have a lot of food production as a result of this, but in the basin around San'a, the capital, for instance, four times more water is being pumped out than is being recharged, and the aquifer is dropping three meters a year."

Often the new technology combines catastrophically with government policies.[1] Until the early 1990s, individual farmers in Mexico used powerful pumps, concluding, "If I don't pump fast

Saudi Arabia provides perhaps the world's best example of unwanted groundwater depletion. After helping to launch the OPEC embargo of 1973, Saudis feared other countries might retaliate with a grain embargo, so they launched a program to make the country self-sufficient in grain. As Postel explains, the nation subsidized farmers' land, equipment, and water, and paid them several times the world market price for grain. The result was that for a short time Saudi Arabia managed to become a grain exporter. Because of the country's hot, arid climate, each ton of grain required 3,000 tons of water, triple the usual ratio. When Saudi Arabia was forced to make budget cuts in the mid-1990s, the effort could not be sustained. The curtailment of subsidies caused grain production to fall by 60 percent. That may be just as well, since Saudi Arabia otherwise would have run out of groundwater by 2040. Even now, with a more modest agricultural program, the Saudis continue to run a significant groundwater deficit.

y neighbor will, so I might as well pump faster
ıan he does." On top of this, the government sub-
dized everything from fertilizer to energy costs
ıd imposed tariffs on competing foreign crops, ac-
·lerating the waste of water. "The whole thing
as a total disaster," Briscoe says. The govern-
ıent finally phased out tariffs and
reated subsidies to encourage sus-
ıinable water use. The reforms
rced thousands of Mexican farm-
rs off the land, yet, Briscoe says,
ıere are "very clear signs" that the
emaining farmers have begun to
ıanage their water use.

In places such as Punjab and Haryana, India's
readbasket states, the new technology also
idened the gap between rich and poor. As wa-
er tables dropped, farmers had to drill deeper
vells and buy more powerful pumps, but only rich
armers could afford the new equipment. Poor
armers, whose shallow pumps became useless,
vere forced to rent their land to richer farmers, for
vhom they became laborers. The IWMI report
ists the consequences if this trend is not reversed:
'Lakes and rivers dry up as the aquifer recedes.
.. The costs of pumping become so high that the
umps are shut down and the whole house of
ards collapses. It is not difficult to believe that In-
lia could lose 25% or more of its total crop pro-
luction under such a scenario."

From the earth's surface, groundwater is invis-
ble: farmers don't realize they've used up an
quifer until it's too late. Even in countries where
imits on withdrawals exist, enforcement is vir-
ually impossible, so no governments have es-
ablished regulations for sustainable groundwater
ıse. Yet reliance on groundwater in agriculture
causes food to be grossly undervalued. Postel es-
timates the global annual groundwater overdraft
in the mid-1990s at about 163 million acre-feet,
or roughly enough water to grow about 198 mil-
lion tons of grain, a tenth of the global harvest.
Agricultural prices are now at their lowest point
in two decades and have forced some American
farmers out of work, but if overpumping were to
cease, grain prices probably would rise signifi-
cantly. Instead, the mounting cost of pumping
groundwater from deeper and deeper levels may
eventually produce the same result.

FOREVER DAMMED

What aquifers are belowground, dams create aboveground. Many environmentalists will tell you, however, that the very concept is faulty, that anything as destructive as a dam cannot be an uncomplicated good. Even by their reckoning, however, the best dam—the one that is the closest to the ideal—surely is Hoover Dam, the first of the modern water era. Hoover is America's Great Pyramid, whose face was designed without adornment to emphasize its power, to focus the eye on its smooth, arcing, awe-inspiring bulk. Yet the dam nods to beauty with a grace that seems to appreciate year by year: its suave Art Deco railings, fluted brass fixtures, and three miles of polished terrazzo granite walkways are the sort of features missing from the purely utilitarian public-works projects of more recent decades. Hoover is a miraculous giant thumbnail that happens to have transformed the American West. Take it away, and you take away water and power from more than 20 million people. Take it away, and you remove a slice of American history, including a piece of the recovery from the Depression, when news of each step in the dam's construction—the drilling of the diversion tunnels, the building of the earth-and-rock cofferdams, the digging to bedrock, the first pouring of foundation, the accretion of five-foot-high cement terraces that eventually formed the face—heartened hungry and dejected people across the land.

The dam and Las Vegas more or less vivified each other; if Hoover evokes glory, Las Vegas, only thirty miles away, is its malignant twin. Even now, Hoover provides 85 percent of Las Vegas's water, turning a desert outpost into the fastest-growing metropolis in the country—so, by all means, take away Las Vegas. Take away Hoover, and you might also have to take away the Allied victory in World War II, which partly depended on warplanes and ships built in southern California with Hoover's hydroelectric current. And take away modern Los Angeles, San Diego, and Phoenix: you reverse the twentieth-century shift of American economic power from East Coast to West. Take away Hoover and the dams it spawned on the Colorado—Glen Canyon, Davis, Parker, Headgate Rock, Palo Verde, all the way to Morelos across the Mexican border—and you restore much of the American Southwest's landscape, including a portion of its abundant agricultural land, to shrub and cactus desert. Above all, take away Hoover, and you take away the American belief in technology, now on a millennial crest of enthusiasm. At Hoover's September 30, 1935, dedication, Interior Secretary Harold Ickes reflected the common understanding when he declared, "Pridefully, man acclaims his conquest of nature." After Hoover every country wanted dams, and every major country, regardless of ide-

What we have learned is that human beings have overcommitted dams and underestimated the water that runs through them

"We build storage reservoirs or pow
ed valleys and our industries to pay for them, bu
every year they store a little less water and a lit
re mud. Reclamation, which should be fo
all time, thus becomes in part the source of a
merely temporary prosperity."

The prosperity is evident, but so, in
ly, is its transience. Dams have
lifetimes as surely as any natura
thing. The rate at which a reser-
the amount of sediment flowing
t. Sediment has filled more
than half the storage capacity o
some dams within a decade. Oth-
is deceptive because the Glen Canyon Dam up-
stream traps most of the sediment that would
otherwise reach it. On average, sediment annu
the world's reservoirs. In China, where soil erode
pacity even before it was commissioned.

Radiating outward from any dam, irrigated wa-
ter slowly poisons the land with salt. Salinit
affected a fifth of the world's agricultural land
nd affects an additional 2 million
res. If in the course of a year a farmer applies
the unremarkable sum of 10,000 tons of water
f salt. It's precisely the process by which an-
cient Mesopotamia turned into the barren desert
temporary southern Iraq. Salt problems are
severe in China, India, Pakistan, Central Asia,
the American West. In many arid areas the soil
ne. As rainwater and snowmelt
hrough a saline watershed to a river, they
lt throughout their path. A few billion
s were full of freshwater, then
turned saline by riverborne
dern water era, dams divert both
ter and the salt. Because reservoirs
vaporation: for example,
a full third of the Colorado's flow evaporates from
irs. In the remaining water, salt concen-
surrounding croplands, where the salt collects.
ter permeates the soil, it accumulates
then returns to the river with a more
ntrated share; on a single trip down the
same water may be used for irriga-
ghteen times. Human use of the Colorado
proximately doubled its salinity. Neither the

bank. As it scours the downstream river, the bed deepens, losing its gravel habitats for spawning fish and the tiny invertebrates they feed on. Within nine years after Hoover Dam was sealed, hungry water took [illegible] first 87-mile stretch of riverbed beneath. In places the riverbed dropped by more than thirteen feet, and it sometimes took floodplain water tables [illegible] undermined some embankments and flood-control levees.

"A dammed river," Wallace Stegner wrote, "is not only stoppered like a bathtub, but it is turned



Hydropower dam near Boise, Idaho

on and off like a tap." Instead of varying with [illegible] meet the requirements of power generation and human recreation. Most fluctuations reflect electricity demand: the river level changes hour by hour and is lower on Sundays and holidays. These quick fluctuations intensify erosion, eventually washing away riverbank trees, shrubs, and grass[illegible] tures lose needed food and shelter.

The changes are registered all the way to the river's mouth and beyond. Because of dams, many major rivers—including the Colorado, the Yellow, [illegible] ly. Without its customary allotment of sediment, [illegible] dams have reduced by four fifths the sediment reaching the southern California coast, causing [illegible] into the ocean. Estuaries, where riverine fresh[illegible]

half a century a foreign fish population has essentially re-

large portions of freshwater and nutrients, the estuaries decline, and with them so do fisheries. Migrating fish such as salmon and steelhead trout find their paths obstructed, both as juveniles swimming downstream to mature and as adults going upstream to spawn. For this reason, the Columbia River, where 2 million fish returned annually to spawn just before the dam era began, has hosted half that number in recent years, and most remaining stocks in the upper river are in danger of extinction.

Only by multiplying all these effects by the number of the world's river basins studded with dams—an overwhelming majority—can the full environmental impact of dams be appreciated.



Parker Dam, [illegible] Arizona

The numbers are stunning. The planet accommodates [illegible] large dams—dams more than four stories high—and some 800,000 small ones. They have shifted so much weight that geophysicists believe they have slightly altered the speed of the earth's rotation, the tilt of its axis, and the shape of its gravitational field. Together they blot out a terrain bigger than California.

The most obvious beneficiaries of dams are politicians, bureaucrats, and builders, all of whom profit from the dams' huge price tags. Think of the towering political leaders of the twentieth century—Roosevelt, Stalin, Mao, Nehru. They all loved dams. Dams provide jobs and a generous [illegible] contractors, some of whom [illegible] a portion back to the politicians. Bureaucrats like dams because that's where the [illegible] of dams creates power to its overseers. The constituents include dam builders, road builders, engineers, electricians, carpenters, cooks, plus every sort of professional boomtowns attract, from developers to prostitutes. In fact, dams, which provide nearly a fifth of the world's electricity, are also among the world's costliest public-works projects; by the time China's Three Gorges Dam is completed (in about 2009), it will have become the world's largest and most expensive, with an estimated cost of up to $75 billion.

The attraction of dams to farmers is obvious. Supported by funding from central governments and international agencies, farmers rarely pay more than 20 percent of the real cost of the irrigated water. The subsidies distort the farmers' economic outlook: instead of planting crops that match the hydrology of their fields, farmers take advantage of abundant cheap water to plant crops that guzzle water, even if the crops bring a low return. In the San Joaquin valley of California, the richest irrigated land in the world, some farmers grow water-guzzling cotton, or, worse (because it is fed to cows, the most notorious guzzlers of all), alfalfa. It takes at least 15,000 tons of water to produce a ton of beef and nearly that much to produce a ton of cotton; comparatively, a ton of grain requires 1,000 tons of water.

Still, many farmers founder. For one thing, canal maintenance is often underfunded and neglected, particularly in developing countries. Planners often overestimate the amount of water available to the system and underestimate leakage, evaporation, and waste. Farmers near a canal head—the "head-enders"—almost invariably receive much more water than those far down the canal—the "tail-enders." The head-enders may have bought their position with bribes; they are often wealthy enough to afford the new equipment, seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides that irrigation farming promotes. At the other end, the tail-enders may be forced to borrow money at high rates; deeply indebted, they often end up as tenants on their own land.

The biggest losers are people displaced by dams. They're usually minorities, often uneducated and powerless, and therefore hard to count or even notice, particularly by a government's ruling elite. If the government bothers to relocate them, it's usually to inferior land, where settled residents resent them. Rates of illness and death usually increase after relocation. One estimate puts the worldwide total of people displaced by dams at 30 to 60 million. As startling as that sum is, it omits another huge group, the floodplain residents living downstream from dams whose livelihoods are jeopar-

Photograph by Martin Stupich

ı ed by the sudden loss of regular nutrient-bearing floods or other hydrological changes.

It dams are so destructive in so many ways, ıy don't we tear them down? The most obvious ı swer is that we can't afford to; dismantling ms is nearly as expensive as building them. ome dams may be decommissioned and drained, ıt in the foreseeable future even those will be w, for the world's reliance on dams for electric ower and irrigation has grown too eat to do without them: a world ruptly deprived of a fifth of its ectricity and a significant portion its food supply would not remain nquil for long. Boxed in by the ze of our population, we have approached a natural limit, damned if e do dam and damned if we don't dam.

The result is a kind of standoff. While dam uilding has largely stopped in the United States nd northern Europe, companies based in North merica, Europe, and Japan continue to lead onstruction efforts in developing nations. But ven Third World governments increasingly must nance dams themselves or look for support from ivate investors. The World Bank once enthuastically financed dams throughout the Third Vorld, until a series of embarrassments, culminating in militant opposition to a project to build 0 large dams, 135 medium-sized ones, and 3,000 nall ones in the Narmada valley of India caused to reconsider. "We now build very few dams," ays Briscoe, the World Bank water specialist.

Although most water experts appreciate the estructive impact of dams, few oppose them enrely. IWMI, the World Bank–supported water gency, concluded a gloomy survey of global waer needs in 2025 by noting that "medium and nall dams will almost certainly . . . be needed." ostel, whose book enumerates dams' many liabilities, nevertheless told me, "I think there's no ay we could be supporting a population of 6 billon today without dams. Water comes at uneven imes of the year, and we've got to have a way to tore it. The question is how."

RAIN, RAIN, GO AWAY

Global warming, we know, is here. Some people think the change chiefly involves temperature, but the phrase is misleading—it leaves out water. Nearly every significant ndicator of hydrologic activity—rainfall, nowmelt, glacial melt, evaporation, transpiration, soil moisture, sedimentation, salinity, and sea evel—is changing at an accelerating pace. Alaskan and Siberian permafrost is beginning to haw; in Antarctica scientists are finding beaches and islands exposed after being covered by ice or thousands of years. The sea level has risen between four and ten inches in the last century. Precipitation is increasing, but so are evaporation, floods, and droughts.

Pick any point of the hydrologic cycle and note the disruption. One analysis of 1900 [illegible] data pegged the increase in precipitation at 2 percent over the century. In water terms this sounds like good news, promising increased supply, but the changing timing and composition of

Most significant indicators [illegible] rainfall, snowmelt, glacial melt, [illegible] level—are changing at an accelerating

the precipitation more than neutralizes the advantage. For one thing, it is likely that more of the precipitation will fall in intense episodes, with flooding a reasonable prospect. In addition, while rainfall will increase, snowfall will decrease. This means that in watersheds that depend on snowmelt, like the Indus, Ganges, Colorado, and San Joaquin river basins, less water will be stored as snow, and more of it will flow in the winter, when it plays no agricultural role; conversely, less of it will flow in the summer, when it is most needed. One computer model showed that on the Animas River at Durango, Colorado, an increase in temperature of 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit—the global change predicted from now to 2100—would cause runoff to rise by 85 percent from January to March but drop by 40 percent from July to September. The rise in temperature increases the probability and intensity of spring floods and threatens dam safety, which is predicated on lower runoff projections. Dams in arid areas also may face increased sedimentation, since a 10 percent annual increase in precipitation can double the volume of sediment washed into rivers.

The consequences multiply. Soil moisture will intensify at the highest northern latitudes, where precipitation will grow far more than evaporation and plant transpiration but where agriculture is nonexistent. At the same time, precipitation will drop over northern mid-latitude continents in summer months, when ample soil moisture is an agricultural necessity.

Meanwhile the sea level will continue to rise as temperatures warm, accelerating saline contamination of freshwater aquifers and river deltas. This already has occurred in Florida, Gaza, and the Nile River delta. The temperature rise will cause increased evaporation, which in turn will lead to a greater incidence of drought. In fact, extreme water-related events such as storms, floods, and droughts will become more frequent and intense.

Perhaps most disturbing of all, the hydrologic cycle is becoming increasingly unpredictable.

Rapid population growth threatens to turn [illegible] of the world's [illegible] water basins, including the Tigris and the Nile, into cauldrons of hostility

cascades downstream with unexpected volume; re- [illegible] water scarcity calls out for intensified planning.

WATER WARS OF THE FUTURE

In the modern era we fight wars over oil and [illegible] water is far more capricious and confound- [illegible] make or break empires; water has already made and broken quite a few. Think of oil, and you [illegible]ture up gushers, cartels, and economic dominance; think of water and you contemplate the elixir of life. Oil belongs to whoever owns the land [illegible] water, with its sprawling underground aquifers and long sinuous rivers, complicates ownership and intertwines nations' fates. Oil promotes [illegible]ndiosity; water teaches humility.

The handy cliché is that sooner or later water [illegible] one water publication to another, World Bank vice president Ismail Serageldin declared [illegible] water." Many foreign leaders have expressed similar sentiments. In the late 1980s, Egyptian foreign minister and soon-to-be U.N. secretary general [illegible] nly issue that could prompt a war [illegible] nflicts, maintains that the last war over [illegible] n the Mesopotamian city [illegible] nd Umma 4,500 years ago. Wolf [illegible] the twentieth century [illegible] strategic: in a conflict in- [illegible] nce the upstream n[illegible] enjoys unhampered access to the river) and m[illegible] ntarily superior. As Wolf puts it, "An upstream r[illegible] parian would have no cause to launch an attac[illegible] and a weaker state would be foolhardy to [illegible] And if a powerful downstream nation retaliat[illegible] gainst a water diversion by, say, destroying i[illegible] well-[illegible] pollution or poison from upstream[illegible] until now, water conflic[illegible] have simmered but rarely boiled[illegible] perhaps because of the universa[illegible] ity of the need for water. Almo[illegible] two fifths of the world's people liv[illegible] two or more countries; the Nile links ten cour[illegible] tries, whose leaders are profoundly aware of on[illegible] another's hydrologic behavior. Countries usua[illegible] ly manage to cooperate about water, even in ur[illegible] likely circumstances. In 1957, Cambodia, Lao[illegible] [illegible] mation throughout the Vietnam War. Throug[illegible] the 1980s and into the 1990s, Israeli and Jor[illegible] danian officials secretly met once or twice a yea[illegible] at a picnic table on the banks of the Yarmū[illegible] River to allocate the river's water supply; thes[illegible] so-called picnic-table summits occurred whil[illegible] the two nations disavowed formal diplomati[illegible] contact. Jerome Delli Priscoli, editor of a thought[illegible] ful trade journal called *Water Policy* and a [illegible] scientist at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers[illegible] believes the whole notion of water conflict i[illegible] overemphasized: "Water irrigation helped buil[illegible] early communities and bring those communi[illegible] ties together in larger functional arrangements[illegible] Such community networking was a primary im[illegible] petus to the growth of civilization. Indeed, wa[illegible] ter may actually be one of humanity's great learn[illegible] ing grounds for building community. . . . The[illegible] thirst for water may be more persuasive than the[illegible] impulse toward conflict."

On the other hand, water has often been the[illegible] goal, tool, or target of conflicts that fall just short[illegible] of war or that contain non-water-related dimen[illegible] sions. Recent history is full of examples. In 1965,[illegible] Syria tried to divert the Jordan River from Israel,[illegible] [illegible] king Israeli airstrikes that forced Syria to[illegible] abandon the effort. Colin Powell, chairman of[illegible] the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff during the 1991[illegible] Gulf War, said in 1996 that the United States[illegible] [illegible] lered bombing dams on the Euphrates and[illegible] Tigris rivers north of Baghdad but desisted, ap[illegible] parently because of the likelihood of high civilian[illegible] casualties. The allies also discussed asking Turkey[illegible] to reduce the Euphrates flow at the Ataturk Dam[illegible] upstream from Iraq. As it was, the allies targeted[illegible] Baghdad's water-supply system while the Iraqis[illegible] destroyed Kuwait's desalination plants.

Postel believes water hostilities are most like-

eet projected demand, water allocation is con-
ide new water-harvesting techniques. The
orld's most contentious water basins—the Ar
Sea region, the Ganges, the Indus, the Colo
nd the Tigris-Euphrates—rapid projected pop-
ation growth
are sufficient to turn the [illegible]
ostility. For instance, in the Tigris-Euphrates
asin, Turkey's position upstream gives it enor-
ous leverage over its downstream neighbors,
yria and Iraq. It's likely that Syria's longtime
upport of the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Par-
in Turkey was at least partly a way of counter-
ng Turkey's control over 80 percent or more of
yria's water supply. But once Turkey captured
bdullah Ocalan, a Kur-
ish guerrilla leader who
ad lived in Syria for
early two decades, Syr-
's leverage
urkey declined. Turkey
uge dam-building pro-
ram that will further di-
inish the Euphrates'
ow into Syria, increas-
ng Syria's grievances.

In the Nile basin the
ituation is more vola-
ile, because the down-
tream nation, Egypt,
lominates the region.
Egypt already diverts so
much Nile water that
he river barely flows to
ts mouth in the Med-
iterranean Sea, and the
Nile Delta is subsiding
because sediment no
onger reaches it. Nev-
ertheless, Egypt is launching vast new irrigation
projects that will divert even more Nile water.
One project will irrigate about 500,000 acres of
Egypt's southwestern desert; another will divert
water beneath the Suez Canal to irrigate
eres of the Sinai Desert. Ye
Ethiopia, the
low, intends to launch its own irrigation and hy-
droelectric projects, which could dramatically
educe downstream water flows. Aaron Wolf, a
rofessor in water conflict management at the Uni-
ersity of Victoria, British Columbia, told me, "I
lon't doubt that if Ethiopia starts building water
projects that restrict the flow of the Nile, Egypt
will bomb them."

Even if water wars remain rare, other sorts of water-related violence already occur frequently and are certain to increase. Thomas F. Homer-

scarcity affects politics. In his 1999 book,
[illegible]
tion and increased profits. In the case of water,
that time is now. In Israel water is grown in-
creasingly scarce; although the nation has been
groundwater at an unsustainable rate.

1967, Israeli authorities instituted a rationing



as much water per capita to Israeli settlers as to
mission to drill wells. When Arabs sought ap-
proval to drill
quently. In addition, because Israelis had
to more sophisticated technology, their wells
posing them to saltwater intrusion. Partly
percent to as low as 3.5 percent of the area of all
West Bank cropland. Many Arab farmers aban-
doned their fields for towns, where they worked
as day laborers, if at all. When the Palestinians re-

presumably primed to participate. "It is reasonable to conclude," Homer-Dixon writes, "that water scarcity and its economic effects contributed to the grievances behind the *intifadah*."

In this manner, water scarcity encourages insurgencies. It reduces economic productivity and forces migration from depleted countryside to ill-prepared city. Social institutions may break down. Division into ethnic, religious, or linguistic groups increases. "Water scarcity rarely causes interstate wars," Homer-Dixon writes. "Rather its impacts are more insidious and indirect: it constrains economic development and contributes to a host of corrosive social processes that can, in turn, produce violence within societies."

OVER THE HORIZON, CHINA

China is not only the world's most populous nation, with 1.3 billion people now and 1.5 billion projected by 2050; it also embodies the planet's extremes of water management and water disaster. China suffers from both severe droughts and severe floods. It is building what will be the world's largest dam, and the number of people that the dam will displace—at least 1.2 million—also will be a record. The Yellow River is the world's siltiest river by a factor of nine. At least 50 million rural Chinese live with an extreme scarcity of drinking water, never mind water for less immediate uses, such as bathing and sanitation.

The essence of China's water problem is that while the nation possesses 21 percent of the world's population, it has access to only 7 percent of the globe's freshwater. More specifically, densely populated northern China includes one third of China's territory, two fifths of its population, and produces 45 percent of its industrial output but receives only a quarter of the country's precipitation. One result is a profound reliance on irrigation: 70 percent of China's grain crop grows on irrigated land (compared with 15 percent in the United States). This hydrologic riddle is nothing new: failure to resolve it has ended dynasties and may yet again. With its ideological claims to legitimacy nullified by its abandonment of Communism, the current government draws what strength it can from the nation's huge economic expansion. But the expansion, volatile and vastly uneven, already has created enormous waves of social change, such as tens of millions of destitute rural migrants to the cities and the rising expectation among city dwellers of running water, indoor toilets, and diets rich in water-intensive beef and pork. China's recent displays of wealth are deceptive, since the nation's leaders are forever trying merely to hold a course amid the country's turbulent demographic currents. The government consequently takes food-related issues seriously. Most officials live through the country's 1959–61 famine, which killed 30 million people, and have no desire to repeat the experience. That famine only increased Chinese leaders' desire for grain self-sufficiency. Through the 1990s, that policy required that at least 95 percent of China's grain be produced domestically.

The irrigation system, unfortunately, is a mess. Of China's 30,000 miles of major rivers, 80 percent are too polluted to support fish. Every year since 1985, the Yellow River, which flows through the heart of northern China's farmlands, has failed to reach its mouth for weeks, and the number of dry days each year has grown progressively, all the way to 226 days in the drought year of 1997. For long stretches, the Yellow hasn't even flowed to Shandong Province, the last province it waters before reaching the sea. Shandong farmers grow a fifth of China's wheat and an eighth of its corn; these days many of them are contemplating a return to rain-fed agriculture, which means they must drop back to one crop a year instead of two or three. More serious still, farmers all over northern China have been depleting aquifers to grow food. One Chinese survey reported that the water table beneath the North China Plain had dropped roughly five feet a year over a recent five-year period.

Rapid industrialization has intensified water scarcity. Water used in Chinese industry produces seventy times as much economic value as water used in agriculture, so industry's needs routinely take precedence over farmers'. Indeed, one reason Shandong farmers get so little Yellow River water is that it is being diverted to factories upstream. Moreover, as cities grow, farmland is taken out of production and turned into industrial and residential areas. Chinese officials are so desperate to develop new sources of water for northern China that they are planning a mammoth diversion that would dwarf Three Gorges Dam in cost and scope. One route would siphon water from a Yangtze River tributary, pump it under the Yellow River, and deliver it to the Beijing region, more than 600 miles away. A U.S. intelligence study places its cost in the hundreds of billions of dollars, enough to dampen government expenditures for other projects for many years into the future. Even that project would probably serve industrial and residential needs before agricultural ones, and its environmental damage would be enormous.

In 1994 the extremity of China's water situation produced an argument across the globe, in Washington. Lester Brown, the environmental researcher and founder of the Worldwatch Institute, claimed that within four decades China's water scarcity would compel a huge drop in the country's grain production, forcing China onto

e world market in such volume that it would
ecome powerful enough
nine Most American China experts thought
own egregiously overstated China's predica-
ent, but the U.S. National Intelligence Coun-
l took him seriously enough to sponsor an ex-
nsive study. At Sandia National Laboratories
telligence officers gathered satellite photos to de-
rmine precisely the extent of Chinese agricul-
ral acreage. They found that
own greatly underestimated the
reage, which seemed to discredit
s theory, but then, having deflat-
l Brown, the NIC concluded that
hina still would need to import
3 million tons of grain by 2025
estimate falling only slightly short
Brown's low-range forecast of 238 million tons
y 2030. Meanwhile, Brown's critics were tossing
ound numbers far below 100 million tons

Chinese officials considered Brown's claims an
front: instead of commending them for their
markable economic gains, a Westerner was ac-
using them of being poised to starve the world.
rown's motive was to persuade the Chinese to
egin conserving water, but they drew nearly the
pposite conclusion: instead of switching to more
crative and water-thrifty export crops, as even
rown's critics (and the NIC) advocated, Chinese
fficials tried to prove Brown wrong by *increasing*
rain production. This meant that Chinese rivers
nd aquifers would be depleted at an even faster
te. Although Chinese officials lately have shown
gns of revising this policy, the argument over
rown's claims still festers. I found this out when
mentioned his name to Vaclav Smil, author of
he estimable 1995 book *China's Environmental*
Crisis. Smil went off like a firecracker: "Stay off
Brown! He's a nut! He's a guy who predicts the
nd of the world and massive food shortages and
igh prices, yet year after year we have the biggest
urpluses of food and the lowest food prices in his-
ory. . . . Come on, get serious." And Smil was
ust getting started.

Of course, all these estimates are certain to be
rong, or, at best, right for the wrong reasons.
The volume of Chinese grain imports thirty
ears from now is unknowable, because so many
ariables will influence the outcome. Every es-
imate takes into account only a fraction of all
he variables and makes different assumptions
bout the variables used. Brown downplays the
mpact of prices, which the optimists believe
vill limit meat, grain, and water consumption;
n the other hand, Brown thinks the optimists
nderestimate the impact of water scarcity. Will
China's agricultural yields increase, as the opti-
nists assume, or will they stagnate, as Brown
elieves? How much money will China invest in
gricultural research? At what rate will China's
land erode, its dams fill with sediment, its wa-
ter become tainted by industrial
sewage? The questions go on and on, and suggest
the folly of predicting production levels decades
into the future.

In fact, the China debate is
larger argument over the impact
ty on global food production half a century from
now. In this dispute the optimists and pessimists

ter probl

are more evenly divided. Among the optimists are the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Food Policy Research Institute, a World Bank–supported nonprofit; the pessimists include Brown, Postel, and IWMI, another World Bank–supported nonprofit. In preparation for a chapter of *The World's Water 2000–2001*, Peter Gleick found himself getting into arguments with people on both sides. "I realized that you can't answer the question without understanding what they're assuming, whether they tell you that they're assuming it or not," Gleick said over the phone. "My conclusion is that people in both camps don't know the answer . . . they're making a whole bunch of assumptions that they aren't telling us. And their crystal ball is no better than anybody else's."

Gleick focused on elucidating the disputed
variables that will determine whether the world will be able to feed itself. Among his variables: Will the world's population in 2050 be closer to 10.7 billion, the U.N's high projection, or 7.3 billion, the U.N's low projection? Will most people eat 2,300 calories a day, the minimum level for health set by the FAO, or will they eat 3,300 calories a day, as people in the wealthier industrialized nations do? What portion of those calories will come from meat? This is a significant statistic, since meat consumption requires that grain be fed to livestock instead of humans. By one estimate, all the grain fed to U.S. livestock is equivalent to the amount needed to feed 400 million people. What will crop yields be? What fraction of crops will be lost to plant disease, pests, storm damage, harvesting inefficiency, spoilage, and waste? These sums now are enormous. Diseases, insects, and weeds destroy about a third of all crops, and a 1997 study estimated that in the United States, 27 percent of all edible food for humans was lost at the retail, consumer, and food-service levels.

Water scarcity dictates another set of questions: What will be the water requirements of

chicken needs 3,500 to 5,700 tons of water, and a ton of beet needs 15,000 to 70,000 tons of wa-
ed? How efficiently will irrigation water be used? At one extreme, flood irrigation requires a low capital expenditure but wastes a vast amount of



water. At the other extreme, drip irrigation requires expensive technology but uses water with
rainfall, rivers and streams, lakes and reser-
groundwater, or reclaimed wastewater? As ground-
is depleted, will other sources be available?

What, finally, will be the impact of climate
Gleick calls this "the down card in the poker game—you can't see it, but you know it's
these questions, he says, the likelihood increases that food and water shortages will be a
feature of twenty-first-century life. "The
line," he notes, "is that a lot of things have to go right to avoid a severe crisis."

THE MIRAGE OF BIG TECHNOLOGY

Of course, "technology" includes a wide rang
ols, from five-dollar drip-irrigation bucke
preference is for big technology, which, as a
ways, seems to promise a painless way out. Th
gleam in their eye now is desalination, th
"As soon as desalination technology gets wate
below, say, thirty cents per cubic meter, yo
really run out of a problem," says Aaron Wol
in what the pessimists would call an overstate
ment. Desalination is useful chiefly as a sourc
for industrial and municipal water in coasta
areas, but the plants are usually too far fro
farmland to justify the ample pumping ex
pense—and agriculture consumes 70 percer
salination plants that now exist, 60 percent ar
state budgets are relatively flush. The price o
desalinated water has dropped in recent years
meter. Tantalizingly, a new desalination plan
planned for Tampa, Florida, will sell water at 5
cents per cubic meter, but the Gulf water i
treats is less saline than ocean water, and th
plant enjoys financing and energy advantage
nation accounts for less than 1 percent of hu
man water needs.

If desalination can't help us dramatically ex-
pand the supply of water, we have no choice but
to reduce our demand for it. Here again, some op-
timists look to a high-tech, big-money solution—
genetic engineering, which could produce crops
with lower water requirements and higher resis-
tance to insects, disease, and toxic substances. But
the future of genetic engineering is uncertain
because of safety concerns and political opposi-
tion in both Europe and the United States. "I ab-
solutely believe we need to work on crop genet-
ics," Gleick says. "But do we bet the house on it?
That's dangerous. I think you have to address
all the food and water questions."

Inevitably, this means increasing water pro-
ductivity, getting more "crop per drop." The po-
worldwide efficiency of agricultural water is 40
percent, which means that most water diverted
for agriculture never even contributes to food
production. Instead, it's lost to evaporation, leaky
pipes, unlined canals, and wasteful irrigation
practices. But whereas the Green Revolution of-
fered a single strategy for increasing crop yield,

n single equivalent exists for the entire water eld. In place of one approach, many have nerged. They usually use fewer resources, cause ss environmental disruption, and cost less than heir twentieth-century predecessors. In contast to big projects such as dams, many of these pproaches give local farmers a stake in the outome and catalyze them to improve management techniques. "There is considerable evidence that farmer-controlled small-scale irrigation has a better record of performance than government-controlled large- or small-scale systems," writes Mark Rosegrant, an IFPRI analyst. The list of potentially useful small-scale methods is long and encompasses technical, managerial, institutional, and agronomic realms. In some places the best technique is a traditional one, such as rooftop or mountain-slope water-harvesting that was ill-advisedly superseded by a big but ultimately wasteful project.

At the top of most lists of appropriate water technology is drip irrigation, which was developed in Israel in the 1960s after cheap plastic tubing became available. Drip systems deliver water directly to individual plant roots, eliminating evaporation and saving water and energy. Drip irrigation not only produces water efficiency as high as 95 percent but also increases yields, since plants receive water on a regular basis instead of the boom-and-bust cycle of flood irrigation. Studies in many countries show that drip irrigation reduces water use by 30 to 70 percent and increases yields by 20 to 90 percent. Since only 1 percent of the world's irrigated lands now use drip and other high-efficiency methods, the potential for water conservation is huge. In India, for instance, 20 percent of irrigated land may be suitable for the technology.

Drip irrigation's major liability is its expense, typically $500 to $1,000 per acre, which has meant that only large farmers growing high-value crops use it. This is one facet of the income gap that irrigation technology has helped foster: a large majority of the farmers in developing countries can't afford the tools of irrigation and so are left out of the global economy. Among them are most of the world's 790 million undernourished people. To Paul Polak, president of a Lakewood, Colorado, nonprofit called International Development Enterprises, this is "a market chasm instead of a market niche." IDE has tried to fill it by working with small businesses in developing countries to design, field-test, manufacture, and market irrigation technology for poor farmers. At the low end of its product line is an easy-to-maintain $5 drip bucket kit, which can irrigate a 10- by 16-foot kitchen garden with two buckets of water a day. If a farmer grows income-generating crops, he can make enough money to

lon-drum kit for $26 that can water a [illegible] square-foot field. In China, where most farms are smaller than an acre, a poor farmer eventually could irrigate his entire field with a $300 system. In Nepal and India, IDE-assisted businesses have sold 10,000 drip kits in two years, enabling farmers to double yields without increasing water consumption.[3]

THE DREAM OF THE OASIS

Las Vegas is America's city of fantasy, and water, not wealth, is its greatest fantasy of all. The city that Hoover Dam made possible is the nation's fastest-growing metropolis in the country's driest state, the perfect manifestation of the notion that water will never run out. Las Vegas and the desert don't match. The city looks as if it didn't so much emerge from its surroundings as get deposited on them. In the boom of ostentation, water is displayed more lasciviously than sex. Among the city's hotel casinos,

Caesars Palace laid down the archetype, festooning its property with fountains and aqueducts. [illegible] outcropping of terraced waterfalls, and a rain forest has been installed beneath a glass canopy

replenished during summer monsoons and the major problem is finding water during the scorching dry season

much of the underground water in the Ganges delta is contaminated with naturally occurring arsenic. The largest mass poisoning in history", 20 million people may already display symptoms. The difficulty arose after officials promoted wells to counter a more immediate health drinking dirty pond water. Although IDE's treadle pumps are used chiefly for agriculture, not human consumption,

feature is a naval battle between British and pi-
sidewalk onlookers five times a night. The Man-
the Venetian, which features—can you guess?—
canals, but unfortunately they resemble noth-
The Venetian even contains a Grand Canal and
a Basilica di San Marco, whose dissimilarities
from the originals include being miniature and
tripe-shirted "gondoliers," who pole them
down the hall, singing into the air-condition-

all its hydraulic glory, the Venetian has
been upstaged by the Bellagio half a mile away.
There, hotelier Steve Winn spent $40 million
feature" specialist WET Design of Universal City,
California, the installation is set within an 11-acre
drop. Inside the lake are 27 million gall
men," 192 "SuperShooters," 350 miles of electrical
of pipe. The electrical load of this assembl
7.5 megawatts, enough for 7,500 homes. Every
half hour, speakers all around the lake introduce
a melody, drawing from an eclectic repertoire
that gives equal billing to Aaron Copland, Lu-
Pavarotti, Lionel Richie, and Marvin Hamlisch. Then, as the music plays, the nozzles rhythmically spew water in sinuous, synchronous arcs
Mist rises lubriciously from the lake. If the sweating spectators are lucky, some of it wafts their way. When I asked Carolyn Nott, WET Design's
many Las Vegas hotels feature water, she had a
and bejeweled appearance belies a canny g
then, Mulroy says,
the rates finally have to come into play." The "mechanisms," however, are uncertain bets. In the short term, Mulroy is trying to persuade reluctan Arizonans to sell part of their allotment of Col
River water. In the long run, she is pinning her hopes on California water, which she think could become available if desalination plant start supplying California. "That's the only logical place to go," she says.

Since its institution in 1995, Las Vegas's con servation plan has already pared 16 percent off the city's projected water use and is calibrated t reach 25 percent by 2010. The biggest problem Mulroy notes, is the insistence by so many residents on growing lawns: two thirds of the city's water is used outdoors. The conservation plan has instituted tiered water rates that force profligate residential users to pay $900 a month o more for water, and the city limits the size o front lawns. The hotels, on the other hand, are forgiven their conspicuous use of water because they are central to Nevada's economy. "The hotels generate somewhere around 70 percent o the state's gross product, and they use 8 percent of all the water we deliver," Mulroy says. "That's not a bad investment." Even so, the hotels pay top-tier rates for their water, and most use treated gray water for their displays: the Mirage and Treasure Island share one underground water-treatment plant, while the Bellagio houses another. Of course, these facilities are hidden from the hotels' guests, for whom the illusion of bountiful water is carefully preserved. I found this out when I asked Mulroy why the hotels don't advise their guests to reuse towels and stint on water use, as other desert resorts do. She said, "Las Vegas sells fantasy. Anything that jars people back to reality is viewed by those who run the hotels as a disincentive." It was the next sentence that I underscored in my brain, as I realized that it summed up the human approach to water at the end of the twentieth century. "People don't want to live in reality," she said.

But reality has a way of forcing its way into human consciousness, and sooner or later we must acknowledge that our relationship to water is intimate, complex, and primal: if we abuse it, we inevitably suffer the consequences. Remove trees from the watershed, and the river below floods; deplete aquifers, and the land above subsides; pollute or obstruct the river, and the effects flow all the way to the sea. We must accommodate ourselves to water, not the other way around. Neither the pollution of our air and soil nor the destruction of wilderness nor even the probable extinction of a majority of the earth's creatures
climate change has prompted us to change our behavior. Now it is the turn of water, the very foundation of life, to teach
animals.

WORLD WORLD

How I learned to stop worrying and love the Blob

By Thomas de Zengotita

Lately it's getting, like, face it—you know?

As genocidal wars go, Kosovo seems to have turned out pretty well. Bombing worked after all. Back home, looks like welfare reform worked, too. Wasn't there supposed to be some urban-riots type thing by this time? Whatever Rubin and Greenspan did, we have this unprecedented economic success, don't we? And all that hard-core Newt stuff, that's history. Some fuss about the WTO and Starbuck's, but there's that African AIDS initiative, which is good, right? GATT and NAFTA caused some pain on all sides of several borders, but the Big Comeuppance promised by the Asian economic crisis never came to pass, and those designer-label seamstresses will catch more of the new action eventually, won't they? China, yadda-yadda, everyone knows the money is talking. I mean, are *you* worried about war over Taiwan? Russia? Okay, a little Chechnya friction, but they helped with the Serbs, and Putin will soon realize that free-form corruption requires institutionalization if it is to do business with IMF institutions. Barak is so into the "peace process"—in fact, the whole Middle East is succumbing to it. Ditto Ireland. Now India and Pakistan want some diplotherapist to broker *their* beef. Maybe even Castro will loosen up when he gets Elián back. If East Timor, classic example of manufactured consent by corporate imperialism, can make the world's to-do list, anything's possible. Prospects for women are certainly better than they've been in the history of the species. And, speaking of species, the peregrine falcon is off the endangered list, and Grand Banks fisheries are replenishing fast. I read where population trends are leveling off. Y2K disasters? In your dreams. What's next? Instant Rain Forest?

Gosh. The more folks shrug off those ponderous old identities and traditions, and those grand political theories and movements, and turn instead toward money, fame, and cool gear, the better things get. Now there's a Bridge to the twenty-first century. Call it World World—as in Disney World, only *much* bigger. A horrifying prospect? When compared with the truly horrifying twentieth century? Meet the only ideology we have left, the one that drives World World's content providers. And what is this "ism" for the Last Man, or (Nietzsche would have loved this) Last Person? We could call it "sensationalism" if the semantic space occupied by socialism and liberalism could be implicated. "Entertainmentism" maybe?

Personally, I file it all under "Blob." Not much of a metaphor, not precise,

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FOR FDR IT WAS "FEAR ITSELF";
FOR JFK IT WAS "ASK NOT WHAT";
FOR MLK IT WAS "I HAVE A DREAM";
FOR BILL IT WAS THE MONICA
STATE OF THE UNION

but anything more specific wouldn't do the idea justice. You'll see.

Anyway, back to the question. Suppose the objective conditions of his- ry (remember them?) forced this choice: World World for all or continu human misery on a massive scale. Pretend it's a values-clarification worksh You'll learn a lot about yourself if you choose. Maybe you already have.

Don't worry. World World will have an Eggheads & Radicals Arc and Chat Room. There you will be free to continue your ruthless unma ing of powerful interests who exploit World World for gargantuan profit. one will think you're a snob or a drag or a threat. No one will know you ist. "Click" and you're gone. Democracy, Blob-style.

LEADER OF THE FREE WORLD WORLD

And Bill was the man, the man with the plan, or without the plan, and t stuff to see it through, or not, depending on the ebb and flow of money a polls. He consolidated trends that have been developing since Kenne TV presidency, but with Bill we crossed a threshold. A future History Ch nel (talk about a *mot juste*) will reference him as the defining figure of our a

To see more deeply into this abyss of necessity, realize that it is Mon and choked-up lies and pastoral sessions with Jesse that made Bill a Wo World historical figure. It is sheer incredibility that entitles him. If what h pened last year had been forecast to you, would you have believed it? credible! But incredible also in the other sense: Of everything he says or d now, isn't it pointless to ask whether he really means it?

As with greats of yore, there was, for Bill, the speech that made histo For Churchill it was "blood, toil," etc.; for FDR it was "fear itself"; for J it was "ask not what"; for MLK it was "I have a dream"—you know the t ten. For Bill, it was the Monica State of the Union. As with Lincoln at G tysburg, it will take time to gather significance, but it will assume World Wo historical importance eventually, because in that performance Bill broug showbiz politics to apotheosis, forcing his vast appetite for dominion up an enthralled planet like some Genghis Khan of virtuality. Remember h it was? Congress, the Supreme Court, the Cabinet, the Foreign Dignitari the Media, somnambulating into a newborn zone of Being in which hallow custom and bizarre context were so surreally fused that the whole table seemed poised to shimmer off into the ether. A new form of stage fright pe meated the halls of Congress and extended to millions, maybe billions, of vie ers. Prime ministers and CEOs, district managers and college deans, sat ri eted to the tube. They knew how central to their success was the ability bullshit their way through an awkward situation. They felt implicit solid ity with Bill, deeper than any substance. Would he fumble? If just one gl gle broke the stillness, what then? Would people be able to go through wi the charade? Most of all: *Was this really happening?*

That most fundamental of questions went unarticulated, assuming the by what Heidegger called its grounding significance. Plebeian as a Shak spearean watchman, the sergeant at arms announced—and Bill did the re Under pressures that would have crushed a citizen of the old real world, strode into an arena without precedent and slam-dunked it into a shape his choosing. In that masterful performance the personal and the politic fused utterly, on a global scale, in real time. History slipped into the futu

We were all carried along, were we not? Bemused, admiring, repelled- no matter; we went with him down the aisle and through the first forma ties, and gradually, as he picked up momentum, we realized it was going be okay. And we were, at some level, profoundly grateful. He kept it togeth himself and World World, in that instituting hour. We could relax back i to accustomed roles—stand or not, clap or not, yawn or yell or switch cha nels—pretending not to notice that everything had changed even as it we back to normal. For if *that* could be normal, then normal could only l "normal" from now on.

On that evening the baseline of those job-approval ratings was set, and th

ve not wavered since. William Jefferson Clinton had indeed done his job. Didn't you just love it when they used all three names? It gave the expression "make a mockery of" a whole new dimension.

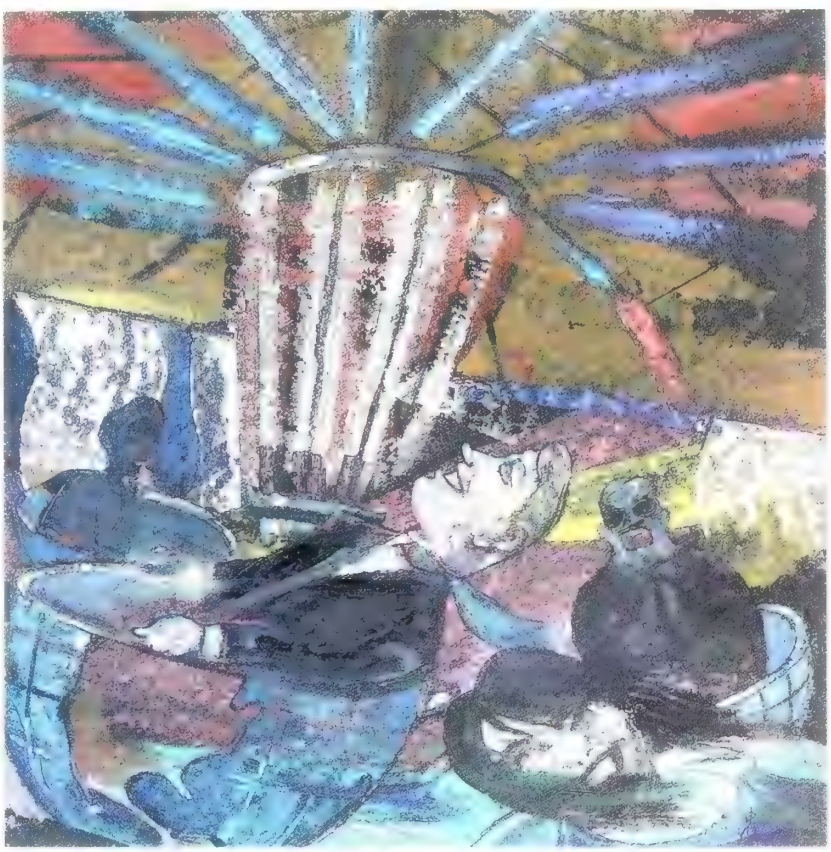
BLOBSTERS ALL

Remember when Dylan sang at Clinton's first inaugural in front of the Lincoln Memorial as fighter jets flew overhead in battle formation? Actor-activist Ron Silver saw those jets roar across the sky, and, recalling the '60s days of rage in that same place, he was troubled. But (after all, he was invited) it soon passed. A sudden realization reconciled him to the scene: "Those are our planes now," he thought.

That's a Blob Moment. You've had them yourself, right?

Don't confuse Blobby moments with hypocrisy and rationalization. The self-deception here is of a different order. Among Blobsters, self-deception is indistinguishable from self-overcoming.

Verstehen or *Einfühlung*. A small example: When Bill says he feels your pain, it's true. There is no limit to his empathic capacities. That's why people are so impressed with his one-on-one skills; the way he listens, the way he makes you feel important. Even really smart people (like you, dear reader) who get face time with Bill and know they are getting the treatment do not, on that account, resist. It makes them feel like insiders to be so treated and to realize it. The Blobby benefits of this doubling are multiple (as everything Blobby is). On the one hand, a gesture that passes for autonomy: describing the encounter later, re-creating every little stroke, you come off so knowing. On the other hand, in that retelling you submit again to the treatment—like Swann, remembering Odette saying something he needs now to believe.



Now we see why there were no John Deans or Elliot Richardsons in Bill's entourage. His subordinates couldn't turn against him, outraged at betrayal, because they had never been deceived. Neither could they desert the sinking ship. They rightly felt ownership of it. In the politics of World World, where the appearance of loyalty matters more than loyalty, serious players can never quit. War Room. Take the Heat. Rain' Cajun. Grrrrrrr.

Suave Mike McCurry embodied this form of followership most publicly. He knew but he didn't know, you know? His superb demeanor conveyed the message. He wasn't loyal; he was "loyal." He couldn't be charged with responsibility, yet he got credit for handling the pressure that would have gone with responsibility if he had really had it. Is that cool or what? The press held Mike in high esteem for this performance. In coming as close to candor as the reflexivity of World World allows, Mike became a role model. He was in the muck of it but above it all—the very state to which power journalists aspire.

Bill provided Blobby moments for all those who were vaguely on the left but of fashionable habit. He let them down in ways that allowed them to acquiesce without a crisis of reflection. He picked issues on which they wouldn't want to waffle publicly and did it for them. Ever since he pulled the switch on that retarded murderer in his last term as governor, Bill has been

IN THE POLITICS OF WORLD WORLD, WHERE THE APPEARANCE OF LOYALTY MATTERS MORE THAN LOYALTY ITSELF, SERIOUS PLAYERS CAN NEVER QUIT

WHEN THE BLOB IS THREATENED, THE MEDIA CORPUSCLES SWARM THE SCENE. THEY MUST COVER ANYTHING THAT MIGHT BECOME UNMEDIATED, *REAL*

facilitating this process. People who wouldn't openly criticize gangsta rap abandon gays in the military or promote global capitalism were enabled tsk-tsk at Bill's New Democrat compromising, even as he did what th didn't object to *that* much. Like some virtual savior, Bill took the sins of generation's expediency upon himself.

SUCKING UP REALITY

The Blob is bigger than Bill, of course. It would be engulfing everythi even if he didn't exist. Think of all the techniques and theories, movies a memoirs, counselors and programs and presentations, that condition your perience. Of course, a few things in life are still just what they are. May you have a nice little unmediated relationship with your feet, rubbing th together under the blankets. Don't fend this off by saying that culture always filtered experience. Just framing that objection makes the point. C ture provided categories taken for granted; the Blob offers—*options*.

Options are good, right? You can choose any product, any opinion, a lifestyle. It doesn't matter. It's like the Internet. As more and more peo make more and more choices, it gets less and less important what th choose. That's why they are free to choose. That's good, right?

Even if it isn't, there's nothing you can do about it. Oh sure, some of are still pretending to real freedom, pretending to retain sharpness and edg But the Blob will not tolerate edges—though "edgy" is fine. Edgy is one the Blob's most active digestive enzymes. Edgy gets us nowhere. What abo sincerity?

Take this Jedediah Purdy fellow. The custodians of our nation's morali have a new poster boy. Jed is out to purge us of irony. He's got a true caus he's writing books, making the rounds. The boy's youth excuses him, b haven't Kristol and Bennett learned anything? The enemy is irony, okay– but Lordy, boys, irony isn't a personality trait, it's a cultural condition. Yo can't *package* sincerity. The impossibility is almost logical. Remember thos canonical Socratic dialogues? You're in a state of self-contradiction here.

Quixotic efforts to penetrate the Blob with sincerity aren't confined to con servatives. Poor Bill McKibben is mourning the death of outrage, too. He can understand complacency about global climatic change. He exhorts us to re flect on the fact that the rain and the wind are now artifacts. He means "ar tifacts" in the literal sense; he's thinking product of carbon dioxide emissions Poor guy, he is very sincere, but he doesn't understand that the wind and th rain were *already* artifacts—of The Weather Channel and twister movies an vacation commercials.

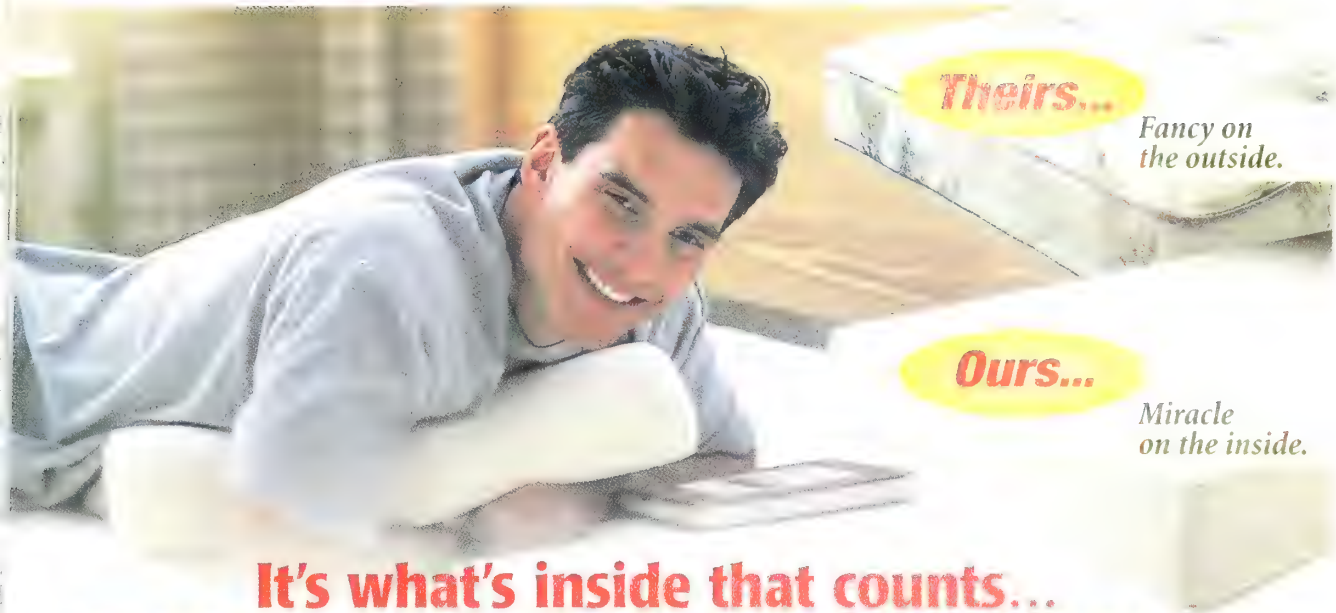
Imagine people, subjected to these mediated exhortations to outrage, ac tually trying to respond to all of them. See the problem? They can't.

Okay, so edgy and sincerity don't work; what about tribal authenticity?

Front-page story, the *New York Times*. Pictured are some South American Indians doing something groupish. Hands raised. Lots of grins. The caption pegs "a workshop in Vicus, Peru," designed by a humanitarian program to help "Indians learn to handle psychological problems brought on by the long Shining Path rebellion." A good thing, right? Better than Shining Path, anyway. Better than Che Guevara? Better than traditional lifeways and rituals? Well, no matter. They're doing the workshops, they *like* the workshops.

Occasionally, an eruption of fate or evil, an earthquake or a school shooting, feels like it might be sharp enough to pierce the pulp and impede the Blob. No way. The media corpuscles swarm to the scene, recognizing the very junctures that require the most coverage. What must be *covered* is anything that might become the one thing the omnitolerant Blob cannot allow: something outside it, something unmediated—something real.

Here is the deeper reason the Blob embraces scandal. The stain on Monica's dress threatened for a while to be irremediably real. It made you wonder how enthusiastic fellatio in the sunlit silence of the Oval Office *sounded*. This is also why Bill is at his best when he's making what threatens to



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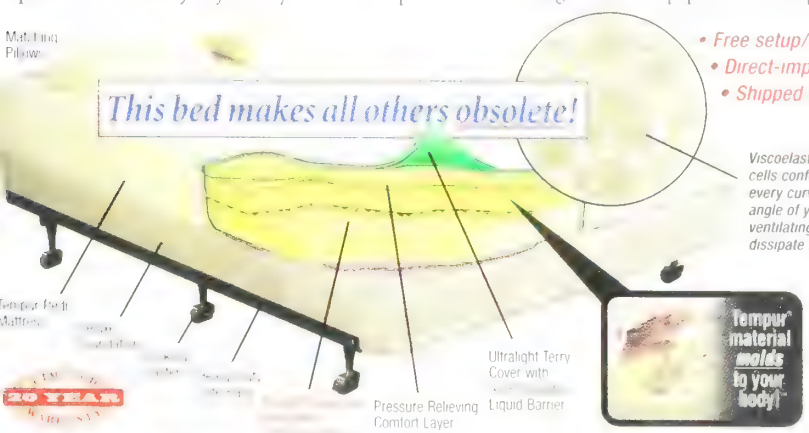
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be real into contact, when he comforts survivors of the disasters the Blob mu cover or reconciles ancient enemies. After enough time with Bill and h agents, these old warriors start to feel outdated, provincial. That's wha turns them. They want to be with it. And when they get with it, they be gin to serve the Blob's agenda.

THE NICE AGENDA

You know what it is. Social Security. Education. Health Care. The Environmen The only issue? How to "get it done." Answer? Money. Now the realists tak over. Because nothing is realer than money. Right?

Blobsters are reflective and ironical bunch, but one thing they pride them selves on, unreflectively and unironically, is their realism. Bruising boardroom and courtroom battles. Staggering sums and careers in the balance. These ar the folks who get it done, because they are the ones who know what "the re ality is." One of their favorite expressions. Because their reality is Worl World, they are known as "players."

Actually, of course, whatever *isn't* money is more real than money. Mon ey has no substance or direction. It doesn't matter where it comes from. I doesn't matter where it goes. It can do anything. That's why the Blob thrive on money. And money is especially compatible with the Nice Agenda. Yo can see it helping. Medicine. Infrastructure. So real. And that realness get attributed to the money that, as they say at the thank-you banquets, "made it possible." In World World it's money—as opposed to, say, God or Nature—that makes reality *possible*. Whew!

Back when politics was animated by visions that resonated to laws o God or Nature, people were authorized for great events, for conquests and revolutions. They dared everything for glory and the cause. You wouldn't talk about the "agenda" of the French Revolution, would you? But aren't we better off without all that, all the intoxicating fantasies that brought dev astation to millions? Aren't we better off if people are limited to the glory of the sports arena and the concert hall? Napoleon? Lenin? Really! I mean how much self-esteem do we want to encourage here? Kant? Wittgenstein? The brass of these guys, pontificating about ultimate reality and the purpose of our lives. Who did they think they were?

Don't get me wrong, it's okay to put them in books and movies. That's where they belong, up in La-La land with the Jedi Knights, not down here where regular folks are fashioning their own philosophies and lifestyles. Today great leaders are exercising great leadership in every company and school and neighborhood—special people doing special things in their own special ways. The old-style heroes weren't empowering; that's the point. They had an intimidating kind of greatness that discouraged you from developing your own greatness. By all means, celebrate those celebrities of the past. Drape the giant banners, mark the centennials and all other ennials, the more the better, actually, because the more we do, the more proportionality we get—and *that*'s what this is about. Proportionality. Likewise with using the Ninth Symphony in margarine commercials, pasting Gandhi on Apple billboards—stuff like that, over and over again, until everything is absorbed among the options. That's fair, right?

Robin Toner got the drift. In a *New York Times* review of Mona Harrington's *Care and Equality*, she hailed a "feminized politics" in which "the country no longer requires the 'warrior hero leaders' of the past." Susan Faludi's on the same track. She extended her compassion to those hapless lunks who flounder in the wake of these developments, invoking "a new paradigm for human progress . . . in a freer, more humane world."

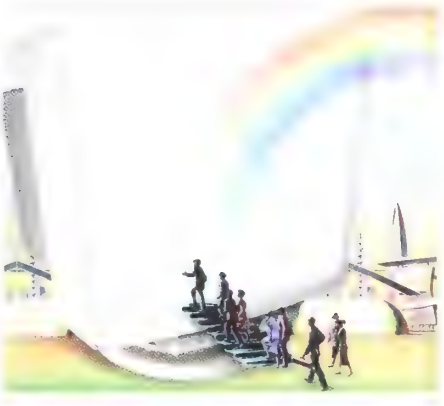
But here's the really original part: in the absence of malignant Fascists or Communists or Capitalists or whatever, this is "a battle against no enemy . . . in service of a brotherhood that includes us all."

Gentle compassion. Now what could be nicer than that? Who could ■

LET'S GO: SILICON VALLEY!

Wherein the author stalks the flighty, green-backed webhead in his natural habitat

By Dennis Cass



You can feel it even when you're stuck in traffic, the tourniquet of Silicon Valley. I'm on Highway 101 somewhere between San Jose and Palo Alto, my white, rented Mustang convertible surrounded by foreign luxury cars painted silver and gold, sedans and coupes so virginal they still have dealer plates. The highway's vine-covered retaining walls block my larger view, but lush green treetops and a perfect California sky hint that beyond this concrete trough lies paradise.

The mellow sunshine, dry air, and abundant plant life make Silicon Valley a naturalist's dream, but I'm here on a different bucket safari: to witness the high-tech employee in his natural habitat. For the longest time I struggled to the publishing boom, the overvalued stocks, the webheads more interested in reducing server packet loss than having sex, but my laughter has grown less heartfelt over time, neutered by all those delicious millions and the meaty pallet of leisure. Every age has its Left Bank, the place where hot, restless souls test their capacity for adventure, the place like Silicon Valley today, where people are more alive than ever or I'll be pecking through the windshield glare of the Mercedes Kompressor next to me. I watch one young, goateed steward of the tur-

to launch a Silicon Valley start-up, I'll never ex-

the swashbuckling entrepreneur, hair ravaged by

my Palm Pilot. I'm all

but I'm less interested in the money than the ad-

ONCE KNOWN FOR ITS FRAGRANT ORCHARDS, SILICON VALLEY

FRUITED PLAIN HAS BECOME PURPLE OFFICE-PARK MAJEST

and meet a thousand Edisons, and it's all in one sprawling, booming frontier town; like Las Vegas, only *smart*.

Eventually the traffic loosens up and I arrive at Hewlett-Packard, the first stop on my self-guided tour. I don't feel an intimate connection to Hewlett-Packard (they make my laser printer, an appliance I appreciate but do not covet), but it makes my list for its historic value. HP's nonhierarchical management style and philosophy of creating useful work, immortalized in founder Dave Packard's book, *The HP Way*, is as much the story of Silicon Valley as the technology. Since the late 1930s, scores of engineers have passed through these halls, and I'm hoping for an Ellis Island experience, to trace a finger slowly down a list of names or maybe to take a rubbing.

After clearing security, my public-relations escort takes me past row after row of silent cubicles to the office of Karen Lewis, Hewlett-Packard's corporate archivist. Lewis, who left the Harvard Archives twelve years ago to help organize the company's fiftieth anniversary, spends her days tending to internal memos, press releases, and business correspondence as if they were Shakespeare folios. She is in her fifties but looks younger, fit and tan, wearing a southwestern shirt, khakis, and wire-rimmed glasses that bring out the sparkle in her brown eyes. Her bright, sterile office is perked up by a single white orchid; along one wall, glass cases display electronic testing equipment as if it were baked goods. Sitting side by side at a small white table, we leaf through Hewlett-Packard's scrapbook of Silicon Valley. It's cute, all these pieces of paper telling a story. She shows me Steve Wozniak's description of what would become the first Apple computer and an attached form from the HP legal department permitting him to develop the idea on his own. Even though it's handwritten on lined paper, with entries as rudimentary as "power supply" and as grandiose as operating system "written entirely by me," Wozniak's proposal looks like what it is, a blueprint for a company. Lewis and I page through other documents and talk about the hope and excitement of the days when the work was [illegible]. Lewis [illegible] everything up and ends our discussion with a slightly bitter aside about how it's all been ruined by the valley's "marketing culture."

Nevertheless, my meeting with Lewis whets my appetite for scientists. I'm hoping Rich Marconi, my tour guide at Hewlett-Packard Labs [illegible] veteran of HP. Marconi is a big man, with thi features and large hands, but his face is soften by a lattice of fine wrinkles. I tell him the reas for my visit, to see Silicon Valley at work, and gives me a wink. "I think I've got something show you," he says. We pass quickly through field of cubicles and approach two doors along t far wall. As Marconi leads me toward the fi door he slows to a creep, and as we tentative cross the threshold I feel like we're sneaking i to his parents' bedroom. Instead, we've entere Dave Packard's office, which has been preserv as a shrine. Immediately I'm struck by the kin of warm, sweet sunshine you'd find in a church a high-end home store. The room is furnishe in 1960s Industrialist, with cork floors, wood pa eling, and Eames-style furniture, and the air dense with a hearty, musky smell. On the wall a pictures of Packard glad-handing former pres dents Reagan and Bush.

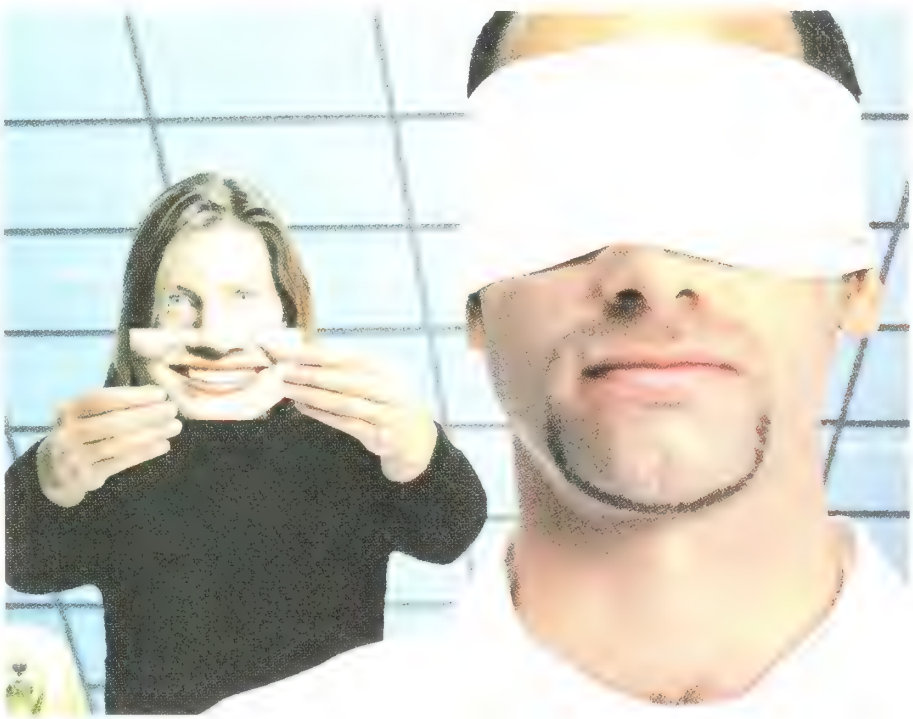
"You've seen the HP garage, haven't you?" H asks as we move through a door into the adjoin ing office, which belongs to William Hewlet "You need to go; it's really the Bethlehem of Si icon Valley." On the wall a thank-you quilt sew by Stanford faculty wives reads "Degree of the Ur common Man." I glance over at Marconi and h nods reverently. "These guys are really good fo society," he says. Marconi then shows me an other icon. On Hewlett's desk is a lined yellow tablet piled with foreign currency, mostly Asian Marconi tells the legend of how Hewlett left a dime on the tablet when he turned the room over to the ages, remarking to his secretary tha someone was bound to steal it as a souvenir. In stead, pilgrims have added to it over the years turning the notepad into a kind of wishing well I dig around in my pocket and find a dime, a nickel, and a penny. I press my sixteen cents gen tly into the tablet and say a prayer fo those about to go public.

I've read that Silicon Valley isn't really a place that exists such as Mountain View and Palo Alto and Sunnyvale, set in a wide plane between the mountains to the west and gold mountains to the east, don't define the valley—ideas do. Undoubtedly this notion helps high-tech visionaries get on television, but unfortunately I'm stuck driving around trying to find places to look at and people to talk to, a task that quickly proves more difficult than expected. Once known for its fragrant white-blossomed orchards, Silicon Valley was called the Valley of Heart's Delight.

the fruited plain has been replaced by purple
ce park majesty. It's a glorious day, but I soon
rn that people don't go outside to enjoy it,
ferring instead to stay inside the company tilt-
the low-lying concrete bunkers with mirrored
ndows that cloak their human capital like a
ovie star hiding behind sunglasses. Nor are
re any signs of cultural life, no matter how
al. I expected a franchise wasteland, but there
vast stretches of leafy business developments
ere there isn't so much as a convenience store,
d after a while I find myself in the strange po-
ion of hoping to see a Taco Bell, if only to
ow that someone is alive.

I'm grateful to find that downtown Palo Alto,
th its low buildings and shady side-
lks, is well populated. On Lewis's
ommendation, I go to a burrito
ce in the hope of rubbing elbows
th Silicon Valley's high-tech
uth culture, maybe a hipster pro-
ammer or a pissy hacker. While
voring my pico de gallo, I eaves-
op on a young man with a goatee
he relates to his friends the story
a co-worker who offered to do
me mapping for him. "Yeah, if you
uld do some mapping for me that
ould be real great," says Goatee
rcastically. His three friends laugh,
ough I'm not sure why. By map-
ng, I think he means a technique
r creating computer graphics,
hich makes me wonder if the co-
orker wasn't up to the task. Or is
ne whole idea of doing mapping,
stead of, say, tessellating, absurd?
r is Goatee himself such a master
apper that even the offer of help is
ridiculous insult? "Yeah, I'd like
u to do some *mapping* for *me*," he
ys, and I get a chill. I've heard this
ne of voice before, coming through the phone
ne while talking to an impatient customer-ser-
ice technician, but it's a thrill witnessing it first-
and, an engineer's disdain for someone who
n't acceptably proficient in high-level pro-
amming languages or NT server configurations
r *Xena, Warrior Princess* trivia. I sympathize. It
n be a burden to be so young and ruthless and
wy, and I imagine that someday there will be
new kind of sadomasochistic role-playing in
hich the technologically adept will pay domi-
atrices to treat them like newbies.

When I first started using computers in college
also shared in the disdain, believing, arduous-
, that Steve Jobs's Apple was good and that
ill Gates's Microsoft was bad, that entering a text
ommand to delete a file was not only counter-
ntuitive but somehow tainted with sin, and that
dragging an image of a piece of paper to a little
trash can led to computing, and personal, salva-
tion. I'm not passionate about computer plat-
forms anymore, but it's still a thrill to walk into
Apple's sprawling lobby, the portal to the feisty,
idealistic company that has always seemed to
want computers to embrace the world rather than
the other way around. The main Apple campus
is made up of six four-story buildings of greenish
glass windows set in dull gray cement, as if the
place had been built by stacking Mac Classics, but
inside it feels like a museum of modern art. The
sky is visible through an open architecture of
white girders and glass; most of the employees
who pass through the atrium are dressed in black.



The cooler ones wear sunglasses inside, but despite
some loud hair everyone is quiet, and the longer
I wait the more I see evidence of strum. A sign by
the ovoid reception pod reads: NO TAILGATING.
EACH PERSON MUST PRESENT HIS/HER APPLE ID
[illegible] ADDRESS. I notice that the glass walls, although
allowing a view of the interior, separate the em-
ployees from the guests like bulletproof glass pro-
tecting bank tellers. Up on a balcony a young
Asian man surveils the lobby as he munches on
a green apple, while nearby two visitors wearing
matching polo shirts and khakis carry on a con-
versation hushed by paranoia. I try to eavesdrop,
but they reposition themselves. Several times, in
between suspicious glances my way, the word
"lunch" escapes their vigil, and, given their in-
tensity, I'm not sure if they are using code words

to protect a new product or discussing the meal that comes between breakfast and dinner.

Eventually Kris Vanacore, my P.R. escort, arrives, and I find out I'm in luck. Every other Friday, Apple has a "beer bust," a regular employee-appreciation kegger, and I get to attend. I follow her across the quad, enjoying the loose collegiate feel of it until I realize that we are hermetically sealed off from the outside world. Vanacore tells me how she got her start teaching Jazzercise at the Apple Health & Fitness Center before moving in to P.R. She still favors aerobics shoes, leggings, and headbands, but she also lets it be known that she's firm about the rules: no talking to Apple employees about Apple products. Outside Caffé Macs, Apple's cafeteria, a few workers sit at patio tables and drink beer out of plastic cups, but despite the sunshine most everyone is inside, where about 200 people mingle around a buffet table loaded with dumplings, sautéed mushrooms, and miniature eggrolls. Vanacore tells me that Jobs hired the chef away from Il Fornaio, his favorite upscale Palo Alto restaurant, to work at Caffé Macs, and she prompts me to dig in. I hesitate, distracted by the luxuriant stone floors and gleaming stainless steel of the cafeteria, which is decorated in a way that I think is supposed to remind me of Tuscany.

The kegger is a sea of khakis and polo shirts, flecked by a few chubby hippies with long gray beards and some punkers with orange-streaked hair and slumpy pants. It seems like a friendly, verbal crowd, and I'm excited to finally talk to an engineer, but whenever I approach a conversation circle they close their ranks. I can't figure out how they know I'm an outsider—is my design unmolded? But then I see that Vanacore has been tailing me, ready to step forward to monitor any conversation. I try to shake her, and for around fifteen minutes we play a game of cat and mouse, which I have no chance of winning, since I'm taller than almost everyone there.

Weary of the chase, I cross the cafeteria to [illegible] group of engineers I noticed standing on the fringes. One is younger, with long red hair and surfer shorts; the other is in his forties and is wearing linen pants and a broad Panama hat, an outfit that seems to say technologist. I introduce myself and ask if I can talk to them about life in Silicon Valley. "No," says Panama Hat. It's a [illegible] hearty guffaw, two syllables that start high and slide low, getting louder along the way. It's the nicest I've come across. "I don't want to talk about products or anything, just life at Apple." I say. Another no, with even more emphasis. "How about just life in Silicon Valley?" I venture. "How about you?" I say to Surfer. "I won't use your names." Reluctantly he tells me he's a software engineer from Indiana. When I ask him what people outside Silicon Valley [illegible]

the readily available "microenvironments": th sunny valley, the surf along the coast, the sno in the mountains. "That's it?" I say. "The weath er?" He nods. I ask him about the work, abou what it's like to be part of the Revolution, the Fu ture, but he pretends it's nothing, like takin pictures at the DMV.

Meanwhile, Panama Hat is silently lathering He wants to speak, to give his opinion, to correc and prove, to unleash the scorn. Just then Vana core appears and asks him if he's spoken to me. H says no again, this time turning his displeasur on Vanacore, who doesn't seem up to it. "I d what I'm told," he says. Surfer asks if he is suppose to be talking to me. Vanacore nods, unsure. "S you're from P.R.?" he asks. "Where's your badge? Flustered, Vanacore stands there as Surfer lean over and fingers her badge. "It doesn't say P.R.," he says, prompting Vanacore to explain her wor history. Surfer seems skeptical but relents, h hands in the air, appealing to the eye-in-the-sk

Panama Hat can't stand it anymore. He is start ing to pace. I ask Surfer another question but it aimed at Hat: what does the rest of the country ge wrong about Silicon Valley, what do they simpl not understand? "Everything," says Panama Ha with contempt. I'm still under the impression h is partially kidding, unable as I am to reconcil such anger from a man dressed for tropical fun, bu he makes it clear he's not. "Whenever you read book or see a movie, what happens? The media go it wrong. That is the constant."

"But I really want to get it right," I sa meekly.

Panama Hat glares at me, lowers his voice and speaks slowly, making sure I understand every word. "There is no chance you'll get i right." Suddenly a tap on one of the nearby keg explodes in a shower of foam. We jump at th noise, and Vanacore looks at me as if to say You've done enough; maybe it's time you go.

My experience at Apple jinxes me for the next two days, and I spend a lot of time hiding in the Spanish Mission–style business hotel where I'm staying, admiring all the furniture with data ports. A small developer's conference is being held at my hotel, and while sharing a sectional sofa with one attendee I ask him what the con ference is about. He considers me for a moment then without saying a word turns his head away I feel like I've been snubbed by a supermodel At a nearby coffee shop I wait in line with a young man I take up like a burro with laptops and spec sheets, but when I ask him if he works in the industry he smiles a liar's smile and denies it. Later I drive around the office parks in Santa Clara and Sunnyvale hoping to catch a full park ing lot, which I've read is the sign of a lusty start

STARE AT A ROOM FILLED WITH SUN SPARC SERVERS . . . HEARING THIS

RAIN OF NETSCAPE," AN ITALIAN VISITOR WAS MOVED TO TEARS

I find my parking lot, but it belongs to an iron
vregation company, a kind of twenty-four-
ur, high-tech sweatshop that does piecework for
makers. A young man wearing hospital scrubs
es me a friendly greeting but turns cold when
n't asking questions. Meanwhile his co-workers
slowly start gathering around me like I'm the
elisk in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Then they ask
to leave.

While driving away I try to figure out what
kes this place different, what separates it from
ery other place I've been, where you can't get
ople to shut up about their lives, their secrets,
eir opinions about what's really going on. Feel-
g a little rejected, the next day I go to The
ch Museum of Innovation, a place that by all
ounts has to be nice to me. With its cobalt-
ue-and-mango-orange-tiled exterior, the Tech
useum looks like a great place to get soft-shell
ab. The original museum was an ad hoc col-
tion of exhibits put together by the Junior
ague, and featured quaint exhibits such as tele-
one books stacked like a DNA double helix to
monstrate how much information is held in
e genetic code, but the new Tech is something
e entirely, so breezy and motivated that even the
tter who takes your admission fee gets to sit on
$800 Herman Miller chair. Local high-tech
ms, most of them contributors, use the muse-
n as a corporate-event center cum playground.
he docent tells me about the time Bill Gates's
ad was projected twenty feet high on the mu-
um's IMAX screen, and the story is clearly in-
nded to impress rather than frighten.

The exhibit halls are divided into four areas,
ch focusing on different kinds of technology,
om communications to biotech. I hope to learn
w computers work, how that magic box turns
es and zeros into text and graphics, but in-
ead every exhibit amounts to little more than
expensive toy—infrared cameras you can scan
urself with, a workstation where you design
ur own roller coaster. The most popular areas
e the studio where you can make a kind of mu-
video thing and a place to design a mountain
ke, complete with marketing brochure, but for
the much-touted interactivity, the kids are
art enough to sense work when they see it,
d a lot of them sneak away from their parents
play on the escalators.

Adults, however, are more gullible, and the
ea that work is play is one of the most integral
rts of the Silicon Valley mythology. My next
op, Netscape, is famous for fun. After it was
bought by despised monolith America Online,
the Web browser lost a lot of its indie charm, but
my expectations are still high. When the Internet
caught on in the mid-1990s, I heard Netscape
stories about people playing roller hockey in the
parking lot and bringing their dogs to work, evi-
dence of how the company championed the an-
archy and freedom of expression of the Web. Pat-
ti Pierson, my tour guide, is a little worn out by the
hype, tired of answering the same questions—are
you a millionaire? chief among them—but tries to
remain positive. She says that anytime she and her
friends from home reunite, everyone wants to
know about life at Netscape. "No one wants to
hear about their jobs," she says with a laugh.

Since 1994 the company has grown to employ
3,000 people, who are spread out across twenty-
five buildings, each one bearing the celestial N
that is Netscape's logo. As we walk down a long
street lined with fresh saplings and street lamps
crafted to look like antiques, a peppy white pick-
up truck says [illegible] by. Suddenly it seems like we're at a resort, a
high-tech corporate adventure as imagined by
Disney, where even security builds brand equity.
Pierson takes me to Netscape's visitor center,
where we stare into a dark room filled with dozens
of Sun Spare servers. There is a high whistling
sound of wind rushing through the room, and
the glass vibrates slightly. "You're looking at the
brain of Netscape," says Pierson, and then tells me
that upon seeing this room full of blinking box-
es an Italian visitor was moved to tears. When I
ask Pierson why, she shakes her head. "I have
no idea why someone would do that," she says.

Pierson then guides me through the kind of
workplace you're supposed to envy, listing all the
things that make Netscape a neat place to work.
"People are allowed to bring their dogs," she says.
"One time a dog broke into a conference room in
the middle of an important meeting—but it was
okay." She shows me an impressive model of the
Golden Gate Bridge made out of soda cans and
an ugly couch whose significance I don't under-
stand. "The conference rooms in each building
have a theme," she says as we head toward one
now. We walk by three doors, Van Gogh,
Michelangelo, and da Vinci, before coming to one
marked Janitor. Evidently the practitioners of
the custodial arts are sufficiently inspired.

Even though there must be at least a hundred people
on this floor working away, and there are colorful
cube walls and plenty of humorous interoffice
shot of Bill Gates from his arrest in Albuquerque



engineers. On her dry erase board are the rules
playing blackjack. Blythe seems scared to talk, a
she looks searchingly at Pierson for an appro
ate topic of chat as to what isn't forbidden. Pi
son suggests she tell me a spirited engineer sto
"One time I had to go out and buy Nerf guns
the whole group," Blythe offers tentatively. Pi
son gives me a nudging look: pretty nutty, eh

By now Blythe's reluctance is familiar, and I
starting to feel like a social worker coaxing t
truth out of a neglected child. While walki
through the grounds at Apple I passed by a p
of programmers on break. They were playi
Ping-Pong, which seemed like a marvelous id
but I could tell from their drawn fa
that their match had all the savor o
workout in the prison weight roo
While crashing Silicon Graphics' c
porate cafeteria I tried to strike up
conversation with a table of young e
gineers, one of whom was gesturing
pansively the moment before I walk
up, riffing on the absurdity of his ma
ager's demands. But after I approach
he sat on his hands and stared a
plump grain of sushi rice stuck to
tray. When I asked his friend, an Indi
woman, if she would chat with
about life at Silicon Graphics her for
head creased. "I don't know," she sai
"I think I'd feel bad."

Strangely, the most comfortab
people I meet are the ones who by
accounts should be the most appr
hensive. After sampling a few esta
lished high-tech firms I go to the ve
ture-capital capital of the world, 30
Sand Hill Road. Located in Men
Park, 3000 Sand Hill Road is an old
woodsy office park that looks like
once housed orthodontists, it is now home to t
world's largest collection of venture capitalists, a
so known as VC's. When I ask two businessm
wearing identical pin-striped suits sunning o
the deck outside Sundeck, 3000 Sand Hill's caf
terrible they are VC's they both laugh as if the
could only imagine a life so sweet.

They wouldn't tell me their names or the nam
of their company, a biotech firm involved in pr
tein production that got its first funding a year a
a half ago. Today they come to justify their co
tinued existence, offering hard data in the hop
of more money, and yet when they talk abo
the culture of venture capital their tone is a
most mystical. "People who have money als
have ... interests," says one, who looks like Georg
Will with the bow tie. "What is the gestalt
a small start-up? Only people who have done
cumpeal can." The other offers a similar koa
"Venture capitalists say no a lot, and they can

cardboard, leaving only a two-foot crawl space at the bottom. Pierson and I stand there for a minute, drinking in this mighty fortress against fun. Pierson, bless her, doesn't even try to spin it

ministrative assistant for a group of seventy

E SEALED OFF HIS CUBICLE WITH FOAMCORE AND CARDBOARD
ONSTRUCTING A MIGHTY FORTRESS AGAINST FUN

lain why they say no . . . nor can they explain
they say yes." Both agree, however, on the
r of Silicon Valley, how people here are "self-
cted" for intense competition, those who find
ity in risk, a word they savor as if it were a fine
r.

As we enjoy the sunshine and a splendid view
parking lot filled with hundred-thousand-
ar cars, I listen to them compare Silicon Val-
to centers of industry as varied as Wall Street
Fleet Street, and muse about the region's
ture of invention." We don't talk about what
his invention will lead to or what useful pur-
e it can serve other than vague notions about
ing people communicate, because the utili-
an benefits of technology are assumed.
hnology has irrefutably changed the way ed-
ted white people live their lives, and since
ng is good, technology must be. But as much
want to find fault with their assumptions, I find
disdain hard to muster. If they act as if they
e complete financial security without any
ging responsibilities, who can blame them?
industry's brief history offers no other lessons.
e of Silicon Valley's mantras is that it is a
t place to fail, a sentiment that I thought
g false. But now that I'm here I realize it's
, not because these supermen have found a
to take the sting out of defeat but because
e is no defeat to feel. With all this money and
portunity a person can no more fail than
someone can go hungry at a restaurant that serves all you can eat.

f the Hewlett-Packard garage is the Bethle-
n of Silicon Valley, Xerox's Palo Alto Re-
rch Center is Jerusalem. Even though I'm an
ostic, as I wind the Mustang up a hill I can't
feeling like I'm approaching the Holy City.
rabbits scurry into the high grass, while the
s along the road are filled with colorful birds
nnot identify. And then I see it, up on the
t of the hill, with its rounded, poured concrete
s, chocolaty windows, and planters built in-
he roofs; it looks like an artist's rendering of
oon colony, conceived in a time when
nology was going to save us all with hover
and robot maids rather than damn us with
nty-hour workweeks and repetitive-stress
orders.

Almost every feature that makes computers ac-
ible—the graphical user interface (or GUI),
Ethernet, the mouse, the workstation, the
er—was invented at PARC. But what makes it an attraction for me is the way PARC's engineers worked. In the early Seventies, undisturbed by the corporate office back East, they would sit around on beanbag chairs and imagine products with no regard for market value, only whether or not the computer science behind them was virtuous and strong. My guide to PARC is Lois Wong, an enthusiastic woman in a double-breasted suit, who leads me down to a conference room that holds the mythic beanbag chairs. Sadly, they have been pushed to the side of the room, which is now dominated by neat rows of leather conference-room chairs as shiny as black beetles. Because Xerox didn't make a dime off of any of its early computing breakthroughs, Wong feels she owes me an apology, and sensing it's going to take some time, I rescue a beanbag from the corner.

Wong explains that, as before, the majority of PARC employees are Ph.D.'s, with an eclectic mix of artists, linguists, anthropologists, and philosophers rounding out the computer scientists. But she also insists that PARC has changed. The center is lean now, both market-driven *and* market-focused, whatever that means. I'm trying to enjoy my beanbag experience, but it's impossible to pick up any residual genius with all this talk of money. "Let's meet some scientists," I say after a while. Wong says that PARC is primarily working on what she calls "workscapes of the future." She brings me over to Lucy Suchman, a laid-back Californian who is one of PARC's resident anthropologists. Suchman has spent the last two years observing a group of CALTRAN civil engineers in an effort to understand their filing habits so that Xerox can help them create digital documents. "What is so hard about filing documents?" she wants to know, and I don't have the heart to tell her: it's menial and boring. We then stop by the office of Roy Want, a stout Brit with a Ph.D. in computer science, who starts talking about radical ways of communicating, the kinds of things you've heard bores like Nicolas Negroponte drone on about in *Wired* magazine, like shoes that can send e-mail to other shoes. I'm half listening, but I'm distracted by his dry erase board, the biggest I've seen yet, filled with an enormous flow chart, the symbolic representation of some thorny problem a future workscape is causing.

"Nice whiteboard," I say.

"Oh, yes," he says. "It's the easiest way to communicate ideas . . . we meet in groups . . ."

He pauses and screws up his face, getting flustered. I realize he thinks I'm insulting him, that he's sharing his dreams of future workscapes and

LABORING IN SILICON VALLEY MAY GIVE WORKERS THE SLOW
LAYERED ORGASMS OF TANTRIC SEX, BUT WHAT DO WE GE

I'm calling him out by praising the primitive charms of the dry erase marker.

"Yes," he says curtly. "Group communication."

After we leave Want's office, Wong guides me over to the stock fountain, a bulbous, flesh-colored thing that bubbles away in a sunny corner. It looks like three robed monks in a wading pool or three dildos taking a bath. She says it's an example of "ubiquitous computing," which is Wong's way of telling me it isn't ubiquitous enough already. "Why is it that you only get information from a workstation?" she wonders out loud. She explains that the fountain flows more heavily when Xerox stock is up and less so when it's down. Medium flow means it's unchanged. "Imagine this notebook is a computer," she says, waving her leather Xerox folder over the fountain as if scanning a box at Trix. "You would simply wand it over the fountain and it would give you stock quotes." After her mock demonstration, the water suddenly surges violently. "Ooh," she says, and we stand there for a moment, admiring its muscles.

After the fountain I'm ready to leave. I love e-mail and Microsoft Word and listening to MP3s, but there is something depressing about PARC Ph.D.'s slaving to find a way to add a few hundredths of a percentage point to America's productivity index, that larger problems don't benefit from their brainpower. But Wong wants me to stay and meet David Hecht, a PARC computer scientist who has been there since 1980. I'm grateful, because as soon as we enter his office I see something I realize I haven't seen anywhere else in the valley: books. I hate myself for loving the sight of them, proving as it does my inner poet's backward thinking, my unbreakableness to the old, but Hecht has stacks of them strewn about, none of them texts on computer science but instead books on art and philosophy. Hecht has bushy black eyebrows and a rumpled face and wears turtlenecks on hot days and is so smart he seems deep. When I comment on his art books he lets a single crease cross his face and starts talking in a disjointed way about how he saw [illegible] in 1984, which, get this, think it, [illegible] Seurat, which, triggered a revelation about how to create pictures with backward and forward slashes he calls glyphs. I ask him if there [illegible] between art and technology. "Creative people are good at creating surprises," he says, slurring his speech out of shyness. "And it doesn't matter if you're creating [illegible]."

[illegible] interesting for Wong interrupts. "Don't you have a meeting at eleven, David?" she says. "David?" She sounds like she's talking to a child. But Hecht is enjoying our talk and doesn't want to go, instead telling me about his undergraduate days at Cooper Union. "You don't want to forget your meeting," says Wong, tapping her watch. Hecht looks pained. It seems wrong, a flack ordering a genius around, and I imagine Hecht, out for a walk, trying to come up with some surprises, and passing by the stock fountain, and being reminded to shape up and have and get back to work, because the water must flow.

In Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, threshers and steam engines encroach on the pastoral lives of strapping farmhands and downy milkmaids who are innocent of how these cold, mechanistic technologies will end their way of life. It's a popular theme in nineteenth-century literature. After several days in Silicon Valley I'm starting to feel like one of Hardy's milkmaids, vaguely aware that the world is changing, perhaps for the better, perhaps for the worse, but regardless of my benefits gained there is still a feeling of loss. It's a mistake to romanticize Hardy's farmhands; physical labor is not necessarily virtuous. But the scary thing about romanticizing high-tech work is that the process has become more important than the result. Almost everyone I've met—from Lewis to the protein boys at Sand Hill Road to the oddball engineer at Fry's Electronics who gave me exactly one minute of his time—has insisted that it's "not about the money" but about the "passion." Laboring in Silicon Valley may give workers the same kind of slow, layered orgasms you get from having tantric sex, but what do we get? While sitting in my hotel room I watch spot after spot for e-commerce Web sites, advertisements for mundane products like pet food marketed with a ferocity I have never before witnessed, and though I can't deny that the Web offers a seemingly infinite array of products and services, it's still just shopping.

By the time I get to Oracle, which specializes in Internet databases, I think I can no longer be moved by life in Silicon Valley, but I'm wrong. Oracle is located in Redwood City, California, a small, shabby town whose slogan is CLIMATE BEST BY GOVERNMENT TEST. Redwood City also used to be where dolphins cavorted in Marine World until the grounds were bought by Oracle's CEO, a vastly superior mammal named Larry Ellison. PARC's modular moon colony was built with

ore communal vision of utopia, Oracle's six
erald glass towers fronting Marine World's ar-
ficial lake are symbols of utopia based on
ievement: clean, precise, with a crisp, modern
k that a marketing person might call "aspira-
nal." Building 500's lobby, where I'm waiting
Anna del Rosario to give me a tour, is built to
imidate. I'm sitting, conspicuously, on a spare
ther bench that floats above an enormous delta
textured concrete and little puddles of smooth
ck stones. Everyone is good-looking, like he or
e works in a hair salon or a nightclub, and I feel
e I've come underdressed for an interview or a
te. Near me a businessman in a smart black
t stands holding a cell phone in each hand, jig-
ng them at his sides like a boxer warming up
fore a fight.

Del Rosario is equally well put together, with
bbed brown hair and a suit made of stretchy,
le-green fabric that comes from the future.
fore I can start asking questions, she sits down
d starts interviewing me, scanning me with
ol brown eyes and a firm smile. "We couldn't
d you in any journalist database," she says,
ncerned. I notice that her outfit matches the
bby.

Del Rosario reluctantly leads me upstairs, un-
tisfied with the justification of my career. We
ter Oracle's Corporate Visit Center, where we
lt at an expensive-looking reception pod. She
cks up the phone: "Kelly. Hi. Anna. Favor."
e requests a nondisclosure agreement, a fa-
iliar document in Silicon Valley, and one that
ves Oracle the right to sue me for what the
mpany perceives as leaked information. I
otest, feeling myself grow hot. "If I sign a nondis-
osure agreement then how I can I write my sto-
?" Del Rosario reassures me that it is only a for-
ality, that no one pays attention to NDAs
nyway. "There are customers who are meeting
ere today, and we can't have you writing who is
ere," she says. Over on the wall is a list of the
ay's visitors, and I can't imagine why a famous
ustralian brewery that sells beer in big blue
ns would care if people found out it was here,
ut I agree not to name names and sign.

"Larry built this," she says as we begin our tour
f vacant conference rooms, and I assume she
eans all of it, and by hand. "He has an uncan-
y ability to see things where no one else is able
. You probably won't find a campus as beauti-
l as here." Every year thousands of people come
Oracle's customer center, where they lay their
rearms on expensive inlaid wood tables before
gning what kind of deal I do not know because
el Rosario is forbidden to tell me. She explains
ow accommodating Oracle is, providing wine for
rench visitors and prayer rooms for dignitaries
om the Middle East, but my heart is still pound-
ng from negotiating the NDA. Del Rosario in-
sists that visitors are "very relaxed" and "not intimidated" and "not forced to do anything." But, like an overbearing host who absolutely insists you have a drink, there is something thuggish about the hospitality. Even the finishing touches, such as the complimentary chocolates whose foil wrappers are printed to look like the Earth, seem sinister. "Try one," she urges when we walk by a crystal bowl filled with these tasty symbols of world domination. "They're wonderful."

Seven thousand five hundred people work in Oracle's six towers, and the company has six other buildings within a few miles' radius. Knowing I'll be turned down, I request a look at engineers at work, but del Rosario ignores me and takes me on a tour of Oracle's cafeterias instead. I quickly learn that Oracle has one-upped naming conference rooms after famous painters by giving each building lobby a distinct decorating scheme and restaurant. To compete for Indian engineers, Oracle has an Indian restaurant in Building 600, complete with a tandoor. Building 200 is Japanese; Building 300, Italian. As we tour each cafeteria del Rosario educates me on the Philosophy of Oracle. "We're selling solutions," she says. And: "We want our employees to be challenged yet comfortable." And: "It's a big company, but it feels like you're working in small groups." When we reach The Marketplace in Building 300, del Rosario perks up a little at the showpiece. Chefs are bustly making fresh, crusty bread, and the air smells of chocolate. Del Rosario says you can buy gelato. Finally I have to ask the obvious question, the question that you cannot stifle in a place so opulent you suspect the garbage is manicured: "How much does this place cost?" Del Rosario purses her lips slightly, puzzled. "I don't think anyone has ever asked," she says.

On the way to the company fitness center I make another request to see Oracle at work, and del Rosario looks at me like I'm crazy. "Oh, there's nothing up there," she says with a dismissive wave. The fitness center, however, is a sight. There is a complete gym with a full-size basketball court ("Larry likes to play basketball," says del Rosario, sounding like she's talking about her boyfriend, the team captain), a pool, and StairMasters galore. There is a full-time staff of lantern-jawed men and aerobicized women there to give you a spot or a rubdown. As a nearby employee crunches her abs, I ask del Rosario what is the biggest myth about Silicon Valley. "That Oracle works its people to death," she says. "But everyone is in a good mood. Working hard is your choice."

A few minutes later, as I drive away, I think about a brief encounter in the lobby of Building 300, when del Rosario was telling me about how employees like to play the grand piano in the lobby to relieve stress. At that very moment her friend Stacey Torman appeared, the first non

cafeteria employee I had seen. "I was just going to play the piano," Stacey said, not believing her luck. As we walked away, the first rich chord rising up from the piano, del Rosario gave me a slight smile, but now the moment, which seemed organic at the time, feels staged. As I pull back onto 101, I feel I've made the valley's paranoia my own and wonder almost doubt if it's possible that Oracle's public-relations department, not content to prove the company's business dominance, also needed to orchestrate a moment of beauty and warmth.

At the end of my last day I go to Palo Alto to mingle with the locals. I'm cranky now, frustrated with my trip. In the past two days I have started asking people I meet unfair questions about what Silicon Valley is doing to solve the world's problems, to end hunger and despair, but even my crackpot idealism doesn't muster more than a raised eyebrow. So far nightlife has been a bust in my visit to a sparsely populated San Jose nightclub the only people I encountered were completely outside the computer industry, making me realize that, in a strange reversal of the natural social order, in Silicon Valley only losers go out on a Saturday night. Cool people work. I have one place left on my list, and then I'm ready to quit. Gordon Biersch is a small, local chain of microbreweries, and, like everything else in Silicon Valley, the Palo Alto branch is luxurious, with a cathedral ceiling festooned with crimson banners and rich woodwork and an arched glass window filling an entire wall, tempting you with a peek at the brewery's intimate workings. One Silicon Valley legend tells of an Oracle vice president nicknamed Smoky who quit his job to tend bar at Gordon Biersch, where he would dispense technical and business advice to the techlorn. When I heard the story I thought the engineer who told it was being sarcastic, that Silicon Valley was so warped by work that even the *bartenders* are computer experts, but instead he meant the opposite. The story was proof of the perfection of Silicon Valley, where you can expect wisdom and guidance from the guy who taps your beer.

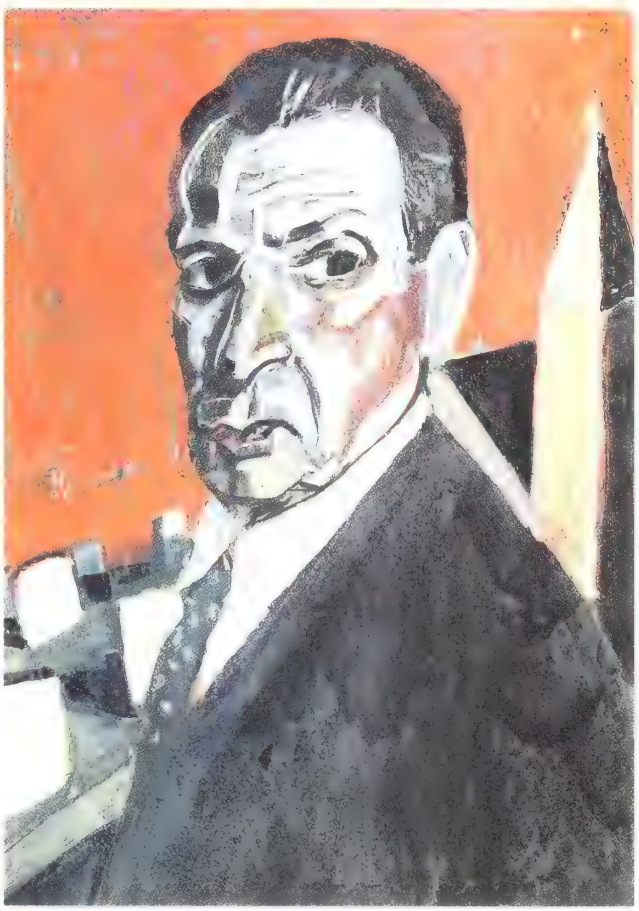
At first I'm pleased to be among people taking it easy, but I soon realize everyone here is still working. I sweep down the bar from me an engineer is writing code on a small square of graph paper, each character so small and neatly constructed that it looks like it's been printed, while behind me an unusually loud marketing guy is making fun of the Old Economy the way a teenager ridicules his parents' taste in music. "It's not like we're in the auto industry where nothing changes," he snorts. "We have earth-shaking changes every two weeks." It's a typical comment, but after a week in Silicon Valley I've learned not to put too much stock in such [illegible] while there are immediate changes every day many of them ar cosmetic. Even the larger debate, the efforts to rec oncile America's old economic dominance witl the new, seems about as important as debating th merits of the Big Mac versus the Whopper. Th old joke is that if Microsoft made cars they woul require Windows gasoline and quit in the middl of the freeway. The rebuttal is that if cars were lik computers their performance would improve ever year while simultaneously dropping in price. Ei ther way the debate about the reliability of the In dustrial Age versus the instability of the Infor mation Age misses the larger point: tha computers, like cars before them, are changing ou lives less because of how they function than be cause we can't function without them.

An engineer takes the seat next to mine, lay ing down his copy of *Dive Training* magazine or the bar. His name is Cameron Forbes, and he ha the egg-shaped, balding head and wire-rim glass es of a cartoon engineer, despite his "very Boston ian-sounding name." A field applications engi neer for a local chip company, Forbes i surprisingly willing to talk to me about what he calls Hollywood for engineers. He has a start up story, about how he joined a company that had "a product with no market," but mostly he seems to want to talk about his love life, which he admits could be better. Even though more and more women are working in the valley, it hasn't helped very many sex lives, and Forbes talks about his dating life as if it were a medical condition. But he isn't complaining. Like others who admit the lovelessness of Silicon Valley, Forbes is quick to buck himself up with talk of career opportunities. The chase is never-ending, letting engineers and marketing whizzes satisfy the reproductive urge entirely through their jobs. He also confirms my suspicions that much of what Silicon Valley does best has less to do with solutions, or communication, or revolution, than with self-perpetuation, that much of the revered work serves only to create more work, what Forbes slyly calls the "continual replacement market." Forbes may be exaggerating, but even if he were 100 percent right it wouldn't matter. Everyone from the head of the Federal Reserve to the guy who does the newsletter for the Norman, Oklahoma, Chamber of Commerce has proclaimed that high tech is the future, leaving communities around the country scrambling to duplicate the high-tech corridor along Highway 101. Regardless of what happens to the market in the short term, we're all signed up for a Silicon Valley existence in the long term. I remember standing outside the Oracle fitness center and asking Anna del Rosario what Silicon Valley was missing, what it needed. "Nothing," was her immediate reply. "It is probably the most complete place on earth."

THE GLORY OF J.F. POWERS

A writer's work is resurrected

By Donna Tartt



scussed in this essay

onte d'Urban (336 pages, $12.95), *Wheat that Springeth reen* (327 pages, $12.95), and *The Stories* (570 pages, 4.95), by J. F. Powers. New York Review of Books Press.

When the American writer J. F. Powers died in Minnesota last summer, at eighty-ne, all of his books were out of print—cluding *Morte d'Urban*, the novel for hich he won the National Book ward in 1963. This and his other rks had received the highest praise nly to sink into obscurity and neglect, ried in the murk of small-town liaries and secondhand bookshops. Of *heat that Springeth Green* (which was minated for a National Book Award 1988), the *New York Times* remarked at its excellence ought to shame the erary establishment into rushing Pows's early books back into print. But the terary establishment is not so easily amed, and the books slumbered on.

I had not heard of Mr. Powers. I first arned of him last year when his obitary (and his wary, intelligent photoaph) caught my attention. The notice his death made a little too much of s religion (Catholicism) and his subct matter (the Church)—so much hat I was under the brief impression hat he had been Father Powers. (In ct, he was married, with five chilren.) Praise for his work—a whole horus of it—ranged from formidable rthodoxy (Evelyn Waugh, Flannery 'Connor, Thomas Merton) to writers ho, one presumes, couldn't give a oot about Catholic concerns: William ass, Philip Roth, Gore Vidal. Yet owers's Catholicism (and his status as a "Catholic writer") was so violently stressed by all commentators that it made me a bit suspicious. If he was as good as he was cracked up to be, how then did this greatest of living storytellers (as Frank O'Connor called him) die virtually unknown, with his works out of print?

I say "virtually," not "wholly." Denis Donoghue, in the introduction to a new edition of Powers's stories published by the New York Review of Books Press (which also has reissued the novels), writes that the works of Powers are "guarded with jealousy by those who know of them. News of their quality is passed from one adept to another. . . ." One wonders if Powers enjoyed being such a well-kept secret among his admirers. After reading the books for myself in their new editions, all I can say is that I wish a few of these adepts had passed on the good news during Powers's life one-tenth so strenuously as they have circulated through the marketplace after his death. Powers's work is remarkable not for the author's much vaunted Catholicism, or for its "message" (of which more anon), but for its style. Each sentence is carved, clear and polished, always surprising, with a comedy bite that might be characterized as that of E. B. White, Charles Portis, and the Kingsley Amis of *Lucky Jim*, peppered—sparingly, but enough—with the flavors of Nathanael West. The result is prose in pure American, as fourth and newly rich as the prose of Raymond Chandler. But tempered throughout with a gorgeous precision and acidity that one tends to associate with such high-British style [illegible] Waugh and Muggeridge. In its purity of voice and [illegible] quite original.

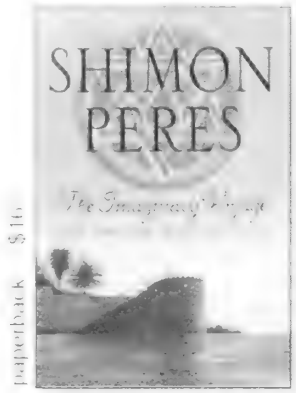
Catholic [illegible] expect in Powers—not [illegible] the word "pious." [illegible] packet copy he [illegible] [illegible] many anecdotes [illegible] reader. To judge from the signed blurbs

Donna Tartt is the author of The Secret History. *She is at work on a new novel.*

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ettes: cities—Detroit and Baltimore, Boston and Philadelphia, Chicago and New York—were driven by Catholic political enemies and by Catholic bishops and many shaken down by Catholic mobsters, patrolled by Catholic beat cops. But it was perhaps Hollywood, more than anything else, that really brought Catholicism out from under the cloud of Protestant suspicion into the American cultural mainstream. Films transformed priests, in the public mind, from suspicious foreigners in black dress to regular, golf playing, man-to-earth guys. Those were the days of Bing Crosby and Spencer Tracy, when army chaplains in war movies invariably wore the Roman collar, when a fellow might run into Bishop Fulton J. Sheen smoking a cigar and laughing it up with Milton Berle down at the Friars Club.

Powers's work incorporates—sardonically for the most part—this panoply of popular type. His Father Urban dreams of starting in his own television program, his Father Hackett (who thwarts a robbery in progress at the local store, where he is an embarrassingly regular customer) is disgusted when the loitering onlookers mistake him—Father Hackett—and his partner (a fellow priest) for "a couple of colorful TV-type troubleshooters." Powers was writing at a moment when these winning popular images of Catholicism were just beginning to fade with age and turn sour or obsolete, when the flight from the cities to the suburbs was draining the lifeblood from the great urban centers of Catholicism; when the "mild consolations of clerical hippies" (to borrow a phrase of Thomas Merton's) had begun, with their sandals and their Volkswagens and their guitars, to mitigate the fraternity of the black robes. Powers's three books of stories (*Prayer for Pantaloon*, 1947, *The Presence of Grace*, 1956, and *Look How the Fish Live*, 1975), which have been collected in one volume, cover this cultural period from beginning to end: from Bishop Sheen and the glory days of Cardinal Spellman's "Powerhouse" to the Vietnam War. To read the first story, "The Lord's Day," in this collection and then put down the book with the sense of having read a great short story is

any ever written, and I mean by anybody—by Chekhov, Sherwood Anderson, Chekhov. What case they have is in the style; there are no easy morals here, no edifying lessons, but their accuracy and correctness make them delightful to read. And while they're terribly funny—laugh-out-loud funny, in spots—they're also complex and deeply serious. "The Devil Was the Joker" is a brilliant character study of an overly earnest young Catholic who accepts a job chauffeuring a sleazy itinerant salesman named Mac McMaster—purveyor of Catholic newspapers and nudie matchbooks—throughout the Great Plains. (McMaster, and several other characters in this story, will reappear later in Powers's novels.) "Prince of Darkness" is characterized by a unnerving sense of evil—passive evil, born of sloth. Father Burner is a cynic who operates on the principle of "discord at any cost. He did not know why. It was a habit. Perhaps it had something to do with being overweight." In fact, he is so overweight that he suspects the tailor of skimping on the cloth for his pants because of the ecclesiastical discount. When he's driving around in his car, he escapes some of the claustrophobia of the confessional (several of Powers's priests are claustrophobic). But even when Father Burner is speeding down the highway in his huge American automobile there's a persistent sense of being strangled, trapped.

> Father Burner reached [illegible] three-light and [illegible] pointed his [illegible] the Word [illegible] the little Servite [illegible] from the ceiling. Father Burner [illegible] briskly at [illegible] finding [illegible]
>
> —"Children of Light and Children of Darkness"

Like many of the stories in this collection, "Prince of Darkness" ends with a jarring sense of discomfort, of narrative expectations reversed. Although we feel sorry for some of Powers's characters, we laugh at them too—at them, not with them. Like most Catholic humorists (O'Connor and Waugh, Alexander Pope)—Powers is ruthless; he doesn't flinch from a joke at the other fellow's expense.

Of the first two collections of short stories, Flannery O'Connor said:



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"Those that deal with the clergy are as good as any stories being written by anybody, those that don't are not so good." The preference may seem suspicious, but the author of "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" is scarcely a propagandist for the Church. No one had less patience for the fiction of "uplift": saintly freckle-faced orphans, bluebirds twittering around the golden head of St. Bernadette at prayer—"pious trash," she called it. What she would have admired in these stories was Powers's cold eye for detail, the walk-on characters realized perfectly in a gesture, the acid description of a pop culture that Powers loathed but whose every nuance he understood perfectly—"the bingo game going on under the Cross for the seamless garment of the Son of Man."

What pieties are to be found in Powers's work are in his stories about race. These must certainly have irritated Miss O'Connor, with her ear for dialogue, because alone among all Powers's characters his African Americans have a stagy quality. Empathy and indignation practically vibrate throughout an early story like "The Trouble," which deals with a lynch mob, but Powers does not carve the characters with his sharpest or even second sharpest knife; he's trying to show us a social evil, and as a result the story is clouded by an anxiety not present in his finer work.

This is to be somewhat overcritical; the level of craftsmanship in these stories is extremely high. And they're not all about Catholicism or social issues by any means. "The Poor Thing" is about a cheerful, controlling invalid and her paid companion. "Look How the Fish Live"—a charming story-title, like the title of a lost work by Seymour Glass—is about a baby dove fallen from the nest in a suburban back yard, and how its caretakers, the children, lose interest as their father's involvement increases. Powers is typically pessimistic about the possibilities of progress—human progress, social or political progress—but here he's disillusioned with nature too, the chirping stupidity of birth and death. "Any bird but the dove would try to do something. Somewhere in the neighborhood this baby dove's mother was posing on a branch like peace itself, with a thought of anything in her head."

Morte d'Urban—the nov that beat out John Updik Vladimir Nabokov, ar Katherine Anne Porter for the N tional Book Award—is the story of mediocre (and fictional) religious o der called the Clementines, and Father Urban, who struggles—unsu cessfully, for the most part, again stubborn superiors—to bring it up speed. Father Urban is a connoisse of gloss and surface, and when h unfashionable little order ("general referred to as the Rinky Dinks") due to Father Urban's efforts, don ed a fashionable office at a "presti address," near the lake in Chicag Father Urban knows exactly how should look in order to appeal t wealthy visitors: "He had wanted t handsome room facing the street be a showplace—mellow prints, ill minated manuscripts, old maps, ca bound volumes, Persian carpets, e chairs, and so on—everything keeping with the oak-paneled wal the bow window, and the fireplace.

> He had wanted the room to be a re dezvous where passers-by would alwa be welcome to drop in and chat, to p ruse the latest in worth-while books a periodicals. Famous visitors to Chica might be induced to show themselv there, and talks might be given too, r all on religious subjects and none narrow, controversial lines. A surprisi amount of good might be accomplish in that way, indirectly. . . . If conve were made in such surroundings, th would probably be of a type badly nee ed and generally neglected—the hig er type.
>
> But Father Bontace had said no to this—the idea of such a nook was as ociated in his mind with Christian S ence—and the room was furnished w junk trucked in from the Novitiate: cl tooled tables and chairs, inhumanly hi and hard, and large, pious oils (copies Renaissance masterpieces, executed b new, leprous Clementine) on wh everybody seemed to be going blind. T room could have been Emma's parlor the turn of the century.

Father Urban is a politician and charmer, and he possesses many of t qualities that characterized Ameri is creation before the 1960s. He is c

without intimacy, canny in busi-
and confident in society, he is op-
tic in outlook, obedient but cal-
ing with authority, chaste but
rious in his morality. In his ener-
nd ambitions, in his manipulative
ing ways, he reminds one of the
icters of Sinclair Lewis and also
atsby, especially in his optimism
ove of the world. He has a taste for
ch whiskey and private railroad
for good dinners and fine cigars
fancy hotels, for convertibles and
He even has an eye for a pretty
gan, which may seem a quaint
h to many in this day and age. Fa-
Urban likes women, and they like
and part of his struggle is to resist
emptations they present.

ather Urban's efforts for his dim,
tractive little order are tireless.
his exile, in a run-down and dis-
solate Minnesota retreat, he woos
ealthy layman named Billy Cos-
e and a hateful old heiress named
Thwaite; he brings down the
se in his address to the Great Plains
mmercial Club at their annual
settia Smorgasbord. Donations are
le, promotions received, and
—despite the efforts of dull Fa-
Boniface to quash him—Father
an is back on top:

Father Urban wanted to set up a se-
ous program—talks by himself and
thers (if others worth hearing could
e found), classes in the papal encycli-
ls, the Great Catholic Books and so
n—but there just wasn't the time for it,
nd perhaps more than time would've
een lacking at St. Monica's for such a
rogram.

So Father Urban played it safe and
ngaged the people on their own
round. He gave card parties for "se-
iors." He put on barn or square dance-
g (as they preferred to call it) for
young marrieds." He tried a rock and
ll dance for "teens"—once. No trou-
le, no, but he found he didn't care for
when he saw what it was like.... For
fen's Club, he sent away for films of
Notre Dame football games, and these
ere studied at smoker sessions.... The
chool nuns were not forgotten. He
ve them the use of his (Phil's) car,
ermission to shop at supermarkets, and
ccasionally he threw the Lesser Reme-
dial ball—"Buy yourself some cigars,
ister." They all loved him.

The battle in *Morte d'Urban* is less
the classic scenario of God and Mammon than God and Management. (One of the chapters is entitled "Second Only to Standard Oil," referring to the efficiency of the Church as a worldwide corporation.) Father Urban's benefactors force him to choose, finally, between what's good for business and what's right. Some critics—Saul Bellow is one—have found the book spiritually dry, but what *Morte d'Urban* lacks is not spirit. What it lacks is faith in American values—values of progress and self-fulfillment, of individualism and "limitless horizons"—values that are so pervasive in popular culture that they are often mistaken for spirituality. Cause and effect, the trusty old American engines, don't drive the plot of this book. Certainty recedes, just as we are on the verge of grasping it; there is the pervasive sense of an overarching reality that we don't quite understand. Powers's flat, restrained sentences are like puzzle pieces that we admire for their color and brilliance; only as they start to accumulate do we begin to see the pattern. But not completely. In Powers's fiction the picture never comes wholly clear. There is only a partial clarity—but it gives a sense of vastness and openness, like a partially restored fresco.

Wheat that Springeth Green is Powers's darkest work. It picks up, in a sense, where *Morte d'Urban* leaves off, with the cheap, dishonest side of American enterprise. Its waspish humor, its sense of the absurd, its distrust of the mob, and its open-mouthed horror at the seediness and transience of American culture all remind one of Nathanael West—and I wonder if it's a coincidence that Father Joe Hackett, the hero of this book, has the same last name as Tod Hackett, the disillusioned protagonist of *The Day of the Locust*.

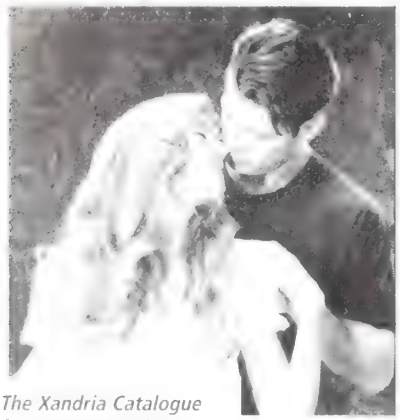
We meet Joe Hackett before he is Father Hackett: while he is still in the nursery. The first few pages of the novel convey with great poise and artistry the bewilderment of early childhood, the hints and jokes that fly over Joe's head when he tiptoes downstairs to join the party, his confusion when the adults laugh at the wrong time. He thinks he's entertaining the party by his clever remarks ("I eat cheese") when actually the jokes are dirty and this nagging sense of not quite getting it sets the tone for the rest of the book, which follows Joe's dissipated youth well into his lonely, cynical adulthood.

What leads Joe to the priesthood isn't clear. Certainly the priest's life is very different from the life of the fast-talking bachelor uncle that young Joe admires: a bootlegger who likes to brag about "hot sexy dates" and ride around in a Chrysler "honking at chicks." The reader can see that glib Uncle Bobby (who gets "a lot of fun out of life") isn't all he's cracked up to be, but still he's a more attractive figure than the priests at Joe's church: Father Day, with his face like a monkey, who disgraces himself by public drunkenness; Father William Stock (known, for his pulpit moneygrubbing, as "Dollar Bill"), who, at the church bazaar, leaps into action when a smelly old tramp tries to walk off with an ice cream cone:

> Father Stock [said]: "Give it back, Mister."
>
> The old man licked the cone. "It's mine and I'm gittin' it."
>
> Joe was astounded to see Father Stock lay across the counter and, like a swimmer doing the breaststroke, swat the cone out of the tramp's hand with only one flip-flopping motion of his arm and settling in the grass.
>
> "Now, you," the old man said, quaintly. Joe saw that he was wearing socks—and was trying to scoop up the ice cream with the cone. For a child, and a boy, Joe was unimpressed when Father Stock helped the old man to his feet and pointed him toward the exit. The old man still held the cone and was blowing on it with his arm.

Joe—predictably—is not an innocent for long. After a blistering interval of teen sex (group sex, reckless, described with a meticulous, poker-faced precision worthy of Voltaire), Joe—the clap-ridden minister of the—jumps forward from the office where Joe is confessing his problems to Father "Germany" Zahn, [illegible] school track coach, and [illegible] without explanation [illegible] mary. At the "semi-[illegible]" contemplative, [illegible] him no trouble [illegible] apparently, [illegible] Father" in

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clerical circles. His ordination to ever seen by "Dollar Bill!") is a disillusioning experience; out in the world, he struggles with decreasing success to maintain his ideals.

If the young Father Joe is always doing battle against himself, Father Joe in middle age just gives up. Pitfalls abound: poker at St. Isidore's ("a hard-drinking rectory"); local politics; crafty parishioners with hidden agendas. Father Hackett is a tough taskmaster—a father knuckling under to the archbishop ("the Arch") is said to "take a dive"—and his life, too, begins to take on a tough bachelor lonelieness that reminds one of Philip Marlowe: the bottle in the drawer alongside the shoe polish, the solitary meals. Too many drinks with his pal Father Letty Beeman in the Little John Lounge of the Robin Hood Room, and Father Joe wakes up the next morning unable to recall whether or not he has (imprudently) committed the archdiocese's printing jobs to a sharpie named "Buzz" whom Father Letty met in the men's room.

And so on. The loss of the mystical sensibility has robbed Father Joe of his capacity to make much sense of the world in which he lives: a purposeless round of fund-raising, infuriating politics ("Get those mothers out of the government," he exclaims at the television during the Chicago Democratic Convention), liquor-store runs, televised sports, and—of course—shopping malls, which are described with the lushly unsympathetic eye of an anthropologist. And some of the funniest passages in the book are about this contrast—about Father Joe's movement away from St. John of the Cross and the pious ideals of the "sem" to more worldly skills:

There are things wrong with *Wise Blood* and *The Violent Bear It Away*, and I'll get to them, but what writer ever produced two novels that good? Though the years between those books, though the [illegible] Powers tried [illegible] subtle means of characterizing Father Hackett's [illegible]. Some of the chapters read almost [illegible]

nes. But—partly because of the [illegible] artistry on a word-to-word [illegible]—partly, too, because these st[illegible] were written over the course of tw[illegible] twelve years—the overall structur[illegible] this book isn't as strong as it could

What makes the novel extraor[illegible] nary is its humor (bitter and cle[illegible] never stops) and minute attentio[illegible] language. There is not a misplac[illegible] comma, not a wrong word. Like m[illegible] prose writers who have studied [illegible] Powers sets up his sentences to exp[illegible] at the end, so that there are marve[illegible] little internal combustions going[illegible] like firecrackers all over the page. [illegible] book took Powers twenty-five year[illegible] write, and, although it's not lon[illegible] complicated, it feels like it took [illegible] twenty-five years, every minute of [illegible] time, word by word, comma by, com[illegible] sentence by sentence, such is its c[illegible] ty and polish. One shudders at w[illegible] he must have gone through to writ[illegible] one wonders that he had the hea[illegible] stick it out; one despairs to think [illegible] never saw it reach the audience it[illegible] served. And while the ending is [illegible] tle abrupt, the book as a whole is [illegible] of complacency. Powers has not gro[illegible] overly fond of the sound of his [illegible] voice, as many aging masters do. [illegible] exhilarating to see an older writer [illegible] struggling so relentlessly with him[illegible] taking the hard way, pushing himse[illegible] an artist right up to the end.

Powers didn't think of himself [illegible] Catholic writer, he disliked the te[illegible] and one can see why, considering t[illegible] it quite unjustly confined him to ri[illegible] to of special-interest fiction where [illegible] scarcely belongs. When intervie[illegible] by a nun for the *American Benedic[illegible] Review*, Powers was asked if he [illegible] any ideas about the special vocatio[illegible] the Catholic fiction writer. He repl[illegible] "No, I'm afraid I don't, Sister, exc[illegible] that obviously he should not w[illegible] rink." Later in the same intervi[illegible] when questioned about the exist[illegible] tialist and pessimistic strains in [illegible] work, he replied, sweetly, "You c[illegible] be a winner, but you can go down [illegible] a winner." If Powers's work and [illegible] deed Powers himself can be summe[illegible] up in one sentence, this is it. So m[illegible] writers in America lose heart, l[illegible] never self-destruct—but not Pow[illegible] Up in his lonely little corner of [illegible] North, he went down swinging.

THE VIGIL

By Joyce Carol Oates



Not jealous but he ght've been lonely. So drove past the house the early evening. Her use, that had been his til the divorce. And e had custody of their ughter, except for pre-sely scheduled visits ith Daddy. *Whatever u want*, he'd said, *if you nt it so badly*. He sn't jealous of her new e (of which he heard om mutual friends, thout inquiring). They ok: he had a new life, o. He wasn't angry, not nature an angry man, t he was a man you ouldn't want to pro-oke, like his uncle in Minnesota, of hom it was said with a bemused shake the head you wouldn't want to make enemy of if you could avoid it. Just it felt necessary some nights to t into his car and drive past the use. Not every night (he had his n life!) but two or three times a ek maybe. Along Ridge Road to the l-de-sac a mile or so beyond the use, turning and driving back casu-ly at a time of evening when his car s one of numerous cars of no special stinction, as he knew himself to be — a man of no special distinction, not young, not old, might've been any husband-father-homeowner in the neighborhood returning to what's called *home*. For in fact he was one of these men, he belonged here. Some nights driving past 11 Ridge Road in the early evening and seeing no lights, or just a kitchen light, or lights in most of the house, meaning they were certainly home, the bluish flicker of the TV like water rippling behind glass, seeing her car (white, compact) in the carport, and if not her car the baby-sitter's car (dark green) in the driveway, meaning she wasn't home yet from work; sometimes he'd glimpse both her car and the baby-sitter's car and a third car, intrusive and jarring to his eye, a new-model Lexus belonging to no one R—— knew, and he would know he'd be returning later that night, around midnight, when all lights at 11 Ridge Road should be out, and there was just the single (white) car in the carport, and he would park his car on the road at the foot of the driveway and sit there quietly in the darkened car thinking, *I am protecting them*. The title he'd bring with him only at night, late, never in the early evening.

Eventually, the Lexus was there most nights. Remaining in the driveway later and later.

So the vigil began by chance, it seemed to R——. He hadn't intended it. He wasn't a man of premeditation. He wasn't even a man who sought revenge. He might've been, she was discovering) a man who sought justice. My *Spirit Possessions* [illegible] was of that brotherhood of the [illegible] loved, now unloved. That [illegible] hood of the dispossessed. Learning to shave without meeting [illegible] in the mirror. Avoiding his reflection in shiny [illegible] mum but mind [illegible] deep at night [illegible] night, dreaming of such things, losing track of time (he had a day life, a

Joyce Carol Oates's most recent novel, Blonde, was published in April by HarperCollins. Her last piece for Harper's Magazine, *"An Sable," appeared in the February 1999 issue. She teaches at Princeton University.*

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[illegible] which he had no need [illegible] though always awake and alert, prepared to protect himself, and the woman and the child in the darkened house. *They know Daddy's here. Where else?*

Not often but occasionally another car would pass his parked car. Headlights flaring up in the rearview mirror, blinding, then gone. He'd tried he was not sure how not wrapping the rifle without knowing what he did, low on the seat beside him so that the passing driver couldn't see. For just to hold the weapon was calming.

He remained there in his parked car on Ridge Road out of sight of the house until he felt it was time to leave. It was safe for him to drive away. *How can I know, I know? I don't.* In the early hours of the morning his thoughts came to him jumbled like popcorn in a popper. How he knew what he wanted to do, needed to do, what was required of him as a man even as he was acting, without thinking beforehand. Possibly this was instinct? Those venomous speckled-gray spiders of the Amazonian rain forest he'd seen on TV, big as a woman's fist yet graceful, swift, swifter than an eye-blink, leaping onto their prey (mostly other insects but also newborn mice, toads, even snakes), the lightest brushing of the spider's hairy body, its sensitive cilia, and the spider leaps. It ticked how he can distinguish prey from not-prey, edible from inedible, helpless prey from fellow predator, the spider would say,

How can I know. I know. I know. I don't know.

R[illegible] an American boy, a rural Minnesota boy. He'd grown up with guns. Rifles, shotguns. Never [illegible] which were concealed [illegible] other than hunting. He'd grown up in a hunting community, though his own father, a public-school principal, hadn't been a hunter. He'd gone deer hunting with his cousins and their [illegible]. He liked to roam the woods and fields with a common purpose, though he hadn't been a [illegible] and proudly told [illegible] He included [illegible] to impress the other men and boys but he hadn't much wanted to kill. He couldn't now remember that he'd killed, though he'd shot his rifle and he'd been in the presence of killing. Frantically shot, thrashing, bleeding deer. He'd wanted to shut his eyes, but there he was, running with the others, shouting. Running with his borrowed rifle held close against his body, the long barrel pointed skyward. He'd never felt comfortable with the weapon. He'd said he wanted to buy his own, but he'd never really pressed his father. What he most remembered was the vigil of the hunt, the dreamy silence of the woods before the shooting began, isolated birds' cries overhead, his steaming breath and quickened heartbeat. *Just to be there. One of them.* These were vivid, happy memories, though in fact he hadn't hunted more than three or four times, always with a Springfield deer-hunting rifle lent to him by his father's younger brother. He was R——, but it hadn't truly mattered which one of them he was, only that he'd been there.

In Axton County, seventy miles northwest of Minneapolis. In the years of his growing up. But he'd never owned a rifle. Not as a boy and not as an adult man. Until now, newly divorced, he felt the necessity. He bought a Springfield target rifle, a .22, in a distant part of the state. But only a single box of bullets.

The sales clerk remarked, *You're starting off modest, eh?*

His wife had hated hunting on principle. Moral principle, for she was a moral person. *Killing for sport,* she called it. Those damning words, *Killing for sport!* Spoken with disdain, derision. R——, who was no hunter and who'd never killed in the Minnesota woods, found himself defending the sport as if defending his and his family's pride. As if hunting were only just that, a sport, a game for boys, not something profound and mysterious. *Hey listen, it isn't like that at all. What it's like.* His wife listened, or pretended to listen. That [illegible] like conviction in her, which had always daunted him, of being right and knowing she was right. In her fierce smiling way saying, yes, but [illegible] your pretty hunting, shooting helpless creatures, terro[illegible] ing animals, and he'd shrugged lik[illegible] boy who meant no harm thou[illegible] harm might come of his actions. H[illegible] wife then asked if there'd been a[illegible] gun accidents in his family, a qu[illegible] tion that took him by surprise. [illegible] told her no. No "gun accident[illegible] Thinking afterward, offended, W[illegible]

don't do careless thin[illegible] Nothing by accident.

When it was time to drive aw[illegible] he drove away. When it was time leave the road above the city and turn to the place he'd moved in but could not bring himself to c[illegible] *home.* When it was time, when was released from his vigil. When became clear to him that *whatev[illegible] was going to happen would not happ[illegible] that night,* and he would place the [illegible] tle in the back of the car, on t[illegible] floor. It wasn't a concealed weapo[illegible] It wasn't an illegal weapon. (He h[illegible] a permit.) *Not that night,* and this [illegible] alization might come after an ho[illegible] or after two hours or after a short[illegible] interlude, forty minutes perhaps; a[illegible] if a car passed by his (driven by [illegible] ex-neighbor on Ridge Road?) [illegible] might quickly depart, not wanting police patrol car to be summoned.

He wasn't worried he'd be reco[illegible] nized by ex-neighbors. He'd bought new car, very different from the ol[illegible] around the time he'd bought the rifl[illegible] Not that he was afraid of being arres[illegible] ed by a police officer, because h[illegible] wasn't breaking any law. What he w[illegible] afraid of was killing a police officer.

When the vigil was over for th[illegible] night he returned to this place which he found himself living. N[illegible] *home.* Never to be *home.* It was on[illegible] a ten-minute drive at night, whe[illegible] the roads were clear. Often he forg[illegible] this place in which he lived when h[illegible] was away from it. A rented place, in[illegible] terchangeable with countless other[illegible] Anonymous rooms. Anonymous fu[illegible] nishings. Sometimes, sleeping ther[illegible] in a bed newly purchased, bo[illegible] springs, mattress, headboard, in h[illegible] confused dreams he wandered, n[illegible] knowing where he was or how ol[illegible] on foot in a childhood memory [illegible] Minnesota, or on Ridge Road abov[illegible] the city, or on a road meant to re[illegible] semble it. That disturbing way [illegible]

ams that seem to be of people,
es, incidents already known to us
yet wrongly assembled. Even
— in these dreams was not
— as he knew himself. Some-
s, in fact, in such dreams he saw
— at a distance, as if he were
t in two: the physical being
— and the R—— who observed
. Oh, but where was he? Why
this happened, R—— so alone?
is woman he loved, and who
ed him—where had she gone?
l the little girl they'd told him
his daughter. *You have a daugh-*
a baby girl. Congratulations! He'd
ught his heart would burst with
piness, he'd never again be un-
py, one of those men other men
ied, but the clock continued
king, hours days weeks months
finally years, the baby girl was
six years old, and he'd become
er, not R—— the father of an in-
t but R—— the banished hus-
d-father-homeowner. And he
uld wake groaning from his
aty, ignoble sleep. And he would
e alone in damp, twisted sheets.
a place of shame. In a bed
lling of his body, yet of newness.
eap-bargain newness. He would
e in this barely furnished apart-
nt on the tenth floor of a newly
t building beside a slate-colored
er. Across the river were apart-
nt buildings like mock mirror-re-
tions of this building. R—— was
inhabitant of approximately four
ms smelling of fresh paint and
sterboard and newly laid wall-to-
l carpeting he could not recall
ing chosen, a dull wet-sand hue,
very color of grime. Not *home*
a temporary set of rooms. As his
, too, was temporary. A continu-
vigil.

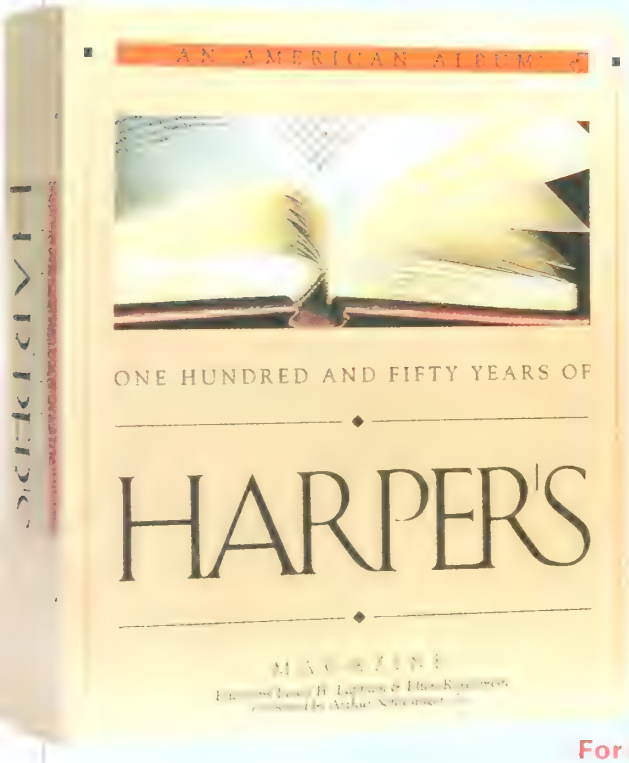
Still, he liked the view from the
th floor. He liked his freedom, he
lared. Not waiting to be asked, for
se remaining friends would not
e wished to ask him, any more
n they would have wished to ask
w he could endure living without
wife, his daughter, his home
estions you can't ask of a man.
estions a man can't answer. So he
quick to declare that he liked the
w from his new place, he liked the
dom the view promised. He liked
the kinds of people who visited him
in this new freedom. Girls he
brought back with him. They were of
the age of adult women yet were un-
mistakably girls. Leaning over the
rail of his miniature balcony admir-
ing the view of the river below. Praising
R—— for the view as if it were a
considerable accomplishment of
R——'s. He said little in response.
Perhaps he wasn't listening. Not
wanting to scream, *Get away from
me! I don't need this.* Not wanting to
plead, *Hey, love me! I'm a deserving
guy.* In this temporary life on the
tenth floor of a high-rise apartment
building, he seemed often not to
know what words meant. As if he'd
awakened in a foreign country in
which words resembling English
words were spoken but were not
words he knew or could mimic.
Thinking how those years he'd been
married he'd spoken without needing
to ponder the meanings of words,
and now that he wasn't married, in
this strange freedom he could barely
speak. Asked how he was, and this
was a question put to him frequently,
like buckshot spraying him from all
angles, he could not think of a reply
except, *Fine!* which came immediate-
ly to his lips. *How's you?* Like a des-
perately sick person asked to give his
temperature, his white-blood-cell
count, the rate of his heartbeat. Mak-
ing love to a naked, laughing blonde
girl with a forehead prematurely
lined like pie dough across which a
fork's prongs have been drawn, he'd
said suddenly, seriously, *Hey, you
don't have to do this. It isn't going to
make any difference in your life.*

Another time, guilty at a girl's
quick warmth and overnight devo-
tion, he'd said, *Whatever you want
from me, I don't have. It's gone.*

Yet even these words, uttered spon-
taneously, without premeditation,
weren't authentic. Just words. Spoken
by R—— as an actor might speak
lines from a script he'd never seen
before and would not
read through to the end.

When it was time to drive away
he drove away. When it was time to
return he returned. In a jacket, dark
trousers, gloves, and sometimes, if he
remembered, clean-shaven, though
[illegible] often not, and his long [illegible]
combed, grown long behind his ears.
In the early evening he commuted
the mile driving in no hurry, but
not conspicuously slowly along the
semicircle of shadowy houses set
back behind stands of pine and de-
ciduous trees and wooden fences. His
own house, the house that had been
his, was the fourth house on the left
after you turned onto Ridge Road,
and the left-hand side of the road
was on higher ground than the right,
for this rural suburban area had been
built on the side of a massive hill lo-
cally known as a mountain though it
was nothing more than a massive
glacier hill rising above the city. This
route he'd memorized. Living here at
11 Ridge Road for seven years of the
twelve. And the earlier years of the
marriage faded like a movie seen long
ago. For the earlier years had preced-
ed the baby girl's birth. Driving along
the road he'd memorized, sometimes
drifting into a dream. A dream of
homecoming. Coming home. Like
the other husbands fathers home-
owners of Ridge Road. As lights were
coming on, at dusk and after. And
the headlights of vehicles. He was a
driver who held off switching on
lights, didn't want to hurry dusk or
the coming of night. Thinking as he
drove past his house (not pausing to
stare, only glancing up the driveway
to see: the white car, the green car,
the Lexus) how strange it was; you
lived in one of these houses and no
other; that's to say, you didn't live in
one of these houses and no other;
and years ago when you'd lived here
if you'd made a mistake and turned
into any driveway except the fourth
(on the left) you'd have been out of
place; you'd have been not-home;
you'd have been experienced not as a
husband father homeowner but as a
stranger, an intruder; if you persisted,
entering the house that was not
home, you'd be a dangerous man, a
criminal. It was such simple [illegible]
might be overlooked.

Now the owner [illegible]
turned up that driveway at dusk, as if
he had the right. You [illegible] to
R——, who had too much pride to
make [illegible] of him. An intruder
an adversary. This man with whom
R—— [illegible] who you'd call in



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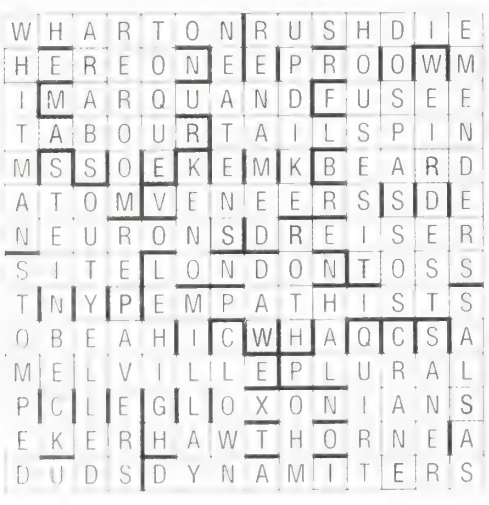
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You'd come to love the voice, t
single voice, you might hear throu
a pipe if you were buried unde
ground and this pipe to the out
world your only salvation. He r
played it until it was more th
memorized. He wondered if she
planned her words beforehand or
she'd only just spoken, trusting to i
stinct. He wondered if the man, t
stranger, had been present, possib
holding her hand. Her voice so re
sonable. Her voice so wary, trigh
ened. (Of R——? Her husband? T
had she hadn't thought of that ear
er.) In the end he'd erased the tap
He had no urge to call her back, e
he recognized that as a good sig
There'd been a time he'd called h
back, left messages on her machir
and his lawyer had told him what
error, she'll save them, of course sh
saved them, to use against you in
court of law, please be prudent, and
you can't trust yourself to be prude
don't contact the woman at all.

It was a usage that rang oddly
R——'s ears. *The woman*. As if
wife, now his ex-wife, was, from t
perspective of a neutral observ
simply *the woman*.

Woman, a specimen. Of a specie

He'd ceased driving along Rid
Road. He'd ceased parking at the e
of the driveway in the early eveni
and later at night. He'd kept the ri
at home, in safekeeping in a clos
He had not contacted her but he
immediately obeyed her, he'd grant
the woman that power over hi
knowing she would rejoice in it. S
would tell her lover, *I think it's all ri*
now. I don't want to file a complaint
the meantime R—— bought a c
very different from the previous c
is that car had been very differe
from the car he'd driven when h
lived in the house at
Ridge Road.

Have to want to kill, to hunt.
was another month now, a new s
son. He'd returned to his vigil a
was feeling good. Driving alo
Ridge Road at dusk, as lights ca
on. That quickening of the pu
when lights begin to come on.
had only to glance to the left as
passed the black mailbox to s
brazen in the driveway, the ne

del metallic-gray Lexus. And her
a white compact of no special
nction, in the carport. And the
y-sitter's car gone. *He's there for
er with them. And then?* R——
tinued to drive along the subur-
road not too fast or conspicuous-
lowly, passing homes like his
, ranch-style, wood-frame and
co and brick, sliding glass doors
redwood decks and cathedral
ings and asphalt driveways and
orts and tall pines and deciduous
s on two-acre lots. This paradise
n which R—— had been ex-
ed like one infected with rabies.
lease, she'd begged, *let's remember
other as we used to be. Can't we?*
troking the rifle, he felt calmed,
sured. He cared for it with a me-
dical tenderness. Oil gleamed on
metal parts like a film of perspi-
on, a smell he liked. And the
ll of the maple stock he'd pol-
d until it shone with pride. Af-
vard, putting on tight-fitting
her gloves and carefully cleaning
rifle of all fingerprints and
dges.
ist to be certain, he'd wiped it
n twice.
lease, she'd begged. R—— whis-
ed, *Yes.*
Driving now to the cul-de-sac a
e beyond 11 Ridge Road and re-
ning and passing the house, see-
that lights were on in most of the
ms. That warm domestic glow
ough sliding glass doors and plate-
s windows partly hidden from the
l by trees. He drove on. Returned
he high-rise building on the river
n the name Riverview Tower af-
ed. And hours later emerging
m in dark clothes, a dark cap
ed down onto his forehead. Re-
ning to his car this time with the
carried inside a garment bag to
emoved from the bag in the pri-
y of his car.
Now he'd returned to his vigil it
late November, and a bright-
he moon shone above the tall
es of Ridge Road. The visible
rld was bathed in chill moonlight
med of color as in a black-and-
ite photograph. There was the
xus still parked in the driveway!
neighbors and passersby to see.
d the white car, her car, diminu-
tive in the carport. Most of the house lights were darkened, but the kitchen light and the lights above the carport were still on.

Maybe it's a game you're playing. But not me.

If she'd wanted R—— to go away forever, she'd have changed the mailbox when he'd moved out. There was that understanding between them.

R—— cut his lights and made a U-turn in the road. He parked a short distance from the driveway of 11 Ridge Road, not where he'd parked last time but at a curve in the road, where his car was partly obscured by a redwood fence and shrubs. He parked facing the driveway. He was counting on the owner of the Lexus not staying the night. For if his wife's lover dared to remain until dawn, and the suburban world coming alive, R—— couldn't last his vigil; he'd have to leave, before he was noticed. But the lover, the adversary, usually left by 2:00 A.M., for R——'s wife seemed not to want the man in her bed all night, out of consideration for their daughter possibly, wanting to spare the six-year-old seeing another man in Daddy's bed; or possibly R——'s wife simply wanted her new lover gone. She'd make use of him as women make use of men and expel him, poor bastard, as she'd expelled R—— when she was finished with him.

So he waited.

Waited in a trance, eyes open but unseeing. Head against the headrest and one gloved hand, his right, laid upon the stock of the rifle. About 2:20 A.M. he heard voices and a car door slamming, and there were the rear red lights of the Lexus and the car being backed out of the driveway. *It's time.* At last R—— felt relief, like a man who'd been swimming underwater now surfacing to the air to fill his lungs with oxygen. Not switching on his ignition until the Lexus was a block away and not switching on his headlights until the Lexus was turning off Ridge Road onto a larger road, a state highway.

R—— followed the metallic-silver car down toward the city and the river. Empty streets, empty intersections. The Lexus moved in the direc-

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to rest a little. R—— felt a distance of about a city block behind. Easy to keep his adversary in sight. Easy to contemplate what he should do. He'd follow me the mom to his home *and then? Hey, dad.* He wasn't certain. When he knew, he would know. He wasn't going to shrink from doing what had to be done, though for the past week or more he'd been in a kind of waking trance, behaving in a way he seemed to know was the "way" to behave, like an actor stumbling through his role yet not believing in it. *But I hate you now. Poor bastard.* They were the only two crossing the bridge, which was a high, humped, double-span bridge, in the moonlight a mesh of crossed steel trusses supported by massive girders and thick stone pillars like ancient towers. The bridge was maybe fifty feet above the river at its highest point. By day an ordinary bridge, weather-worn and sooty, in need of repair, by night a strange fantastical structure that looked as you moved onto it, like a cheap fairground ride. R—— felt a stab of excitement. His hunter's instinct. Keeping the red lights of the car in front of him in sight, matching his speed exactly with his adversary's speed: 40 mph.

Strange, he was smiling. R——, who since the catastrophe so rarely smiled.

I deserve this! Deserve something.

Excellent how a boy he'd be mad. Would flashes of happiness for no apparent reason. Alone at such times. Once, crossing a [illegible] bridge beside a railroad trestle, above the same river in wind-driven wet snow, another time, in a motorboat house, astonished at the ease with which the camera slipped from the [illegible] to the shoulder to shoot the car seen approaching and to an aerial [illegible] the same speed as the [illegible] boat. Instinct.

[illegible] Heat was [illegible]

R—— felt [illegible] to him to be that [illegible] feet a night live in [illegible] [illegible] What it is, R—— every building? And their cars in the [illegible] [illegible] he [illegible] [illegible] R—— was [illegible] wing him now along an elevated riverside highway, seeing in the [illegible] corner of his eye his own [illegible] apartment building across the [illegible] mostly darkened, though here [illegible] there riddled with light, he'd left [illegible] own lights on, even the [illegible] lights [illegible] ble at this distance. The other, [illegible] adversary in the silver-metallic [illegible] lived 2.2 miles from the bridge in [illegible] renovated riverfront area where [illegible] [illegible] condominium "villages" had been [illegible] toned out of derelict warehouses [illegible] factories, aged granite and brick [illegible] refurbished with sleek facades, [illegible] ing plate-glass windows, decks [illegible] balconies overlooking the river. [illegible] place was called Riverside Heights [illegible] It was one of those R—— [illegible] had [illegible] sidered at the time of his separation [illegible]

The way to live now. Now that [illegible]

R—— parked in a shadowy [illegible] headlights off, observing his adversary [illegible] parking the Lexus on the second [illegible] of a well-lighted parking garage. The [illegible] garage was adjacent to a row of [illegible] story townhouses. These residences [illegible] were mostly darkened, and there [illegible] peared to be no one in the vicinity. [illegible] Emptied trash containers at a curb. [illegible] The time was 2:55 A.M. If a shot were [illegible] fired in such a place, the gunman [illegible] would have to flee immediately; [illegible] sibly there'd be time for a second [illegible] shot, but he wouldn't be able to [illegible] amine his victim up close. In R——'s [illegible] gloved hands was the Springfield rifle [illegible] the safety lock now off. The dramatic [illegible] that *click*. R—— had lowered the [illegible] window beside him and was leaning [illegible] out, aiming the barrel at his target, [illegible] liking the feel of the weapon in his [illegible] hands, its weight and heft. Pull the [illegible] trigger or don't pull, it's your choice. [illegible] A way of calming your thoughts. [illegible] *moments on hand, you're not finished with [illegible] anybody including yourself.*

R—— wasn't used to the scope [illegible] turning the focusing ring until [illegible] abruptly he saw his target, his adversary, up close, from a distance of only [illegible] a few feet. Oblivious of R——, the [illegible] man was locking the door of the [illegible] Lexus. His face in the crosshairs of [illegible] R——'s scope. R——'s mouth [illegible] went dry, his heart beginning to [illegible] pound. It was a good sensation. *He [illegible] to want to hunt, to kill. Or was it kill to [illegible]* [illegible] He saw that his wife's lover, [illegible] adversary, was about R——'s age, [illegible] weight, as he'd believed. The [illegible]

· a russet brown leather coat, he
hatless, hair the color of ditch
r and thinning at the crown. His
was slightly coarse, his nose ap-
ed just slightly twisted. His fore-
l was lined. It was late, he was
l, possibly his parting words with
—'s wife troubled him, for a
an's words lingering in the mind
always troubling. R—— didn't
t to think, *Divorced, poor bastard,*
me. Calmly, R—— was following
target through the scope, the
sshairs tremulous on his adver-
g's face, his throat, the carotid
ry, now the side of his head, his
ear, now the back of the head, his
k in the leather coat. So strange,
—'s adversary had no awareness
him! As wild creatures, hunted,
n always to have a sense of being
ched, lifting their heads alertly,
ir eyes moving, ears pricked for
slightest sound, and their nostrils
toming. *Man is the only animal*
gnows of death, is that it? R—— al-
ed his adversary to move behind a
ncrete post, knowing he'd reappear
he exit ramp. There was only one
y for the man to come, to get to
row of town houses. R—— was
nking how once he pulled the trig-
his vigil would end. Once he
led the trigger and his adversary
, whether dead or wounded, or dy-
, once the sound of the shot rang
in this quiet, he, R——, would be
pelled into action. The first thing,
ape. He was certain he'd have no
uble getting out of the Riverside
ights complex. A few seconds, his
dlights off, trusting to street lights
l the waning moon, and he'd be
he. It was his plan to dispose of the
e (this rifle, which was possibly the
ly thing he owned that he truly
ued), drop it in the river on his
y back, and his gloves smelling of
n powder. And his vigil would end.
That would be the hard part. The
il ended.
He would be a prime suspect in the
anger's death. A man not known
rsonally to R——, but of course his
e, that's to say his ex-wife, would
l the police. R——'s life, which
s so intensely private and secret,
uld become a public life, at least
a while. Yet R—— had faith in
nself; he would never be charged
with the "crime." He wouldn't even hire a lawyer; he hated lawyers, living off the misery of others. What would shame him would be having to lie to other men. Not being able to tell other men, men like himself, *Since I killed the bastard fucking my wife.* For he knew (any man knew) it was a necessary act, a just act. But he'd be forced to lie. Forced to make himself into another man, an inferior man, a man who lied. And his vigil, which had come to be his life, would end.

His finger strained against the trigger; he was prepared. Seeing that the man in the leather coat was exiting the parking garage exactly as R—— had anticipated. Now about thirty feet away from R—— and walking with purpose. The paved area through which the adversary moved was well lighted, like the area around R——'s high-rise building (ironically, to deter crime, for these renovated areas near the river were bracketed by poor ghetto neighborhoods with high crime rates and a flourishing drug trade), but R—— was hidden in shadow. If the adversary glanced toward R—— he would see maybe the front bumper, the chrome grill of a parked car, and no more. R—— was watching his adversary through the scope, centering the delicate crosshairs on the man's forehead. *Why should you live, it I can't?* Fire on an intake of breath. Or was it an exhalation of breath? But what was his adversary doing? Instead of heading for one of the town houses, turning his back so that R—— could fire to the heart, he'd gone to the trash cans on the curb and was stooping to drag two of them clumsily with him. Yellow plastic trash containers like R——'s own.

Fuck! Can't kill a man at such a time.

The All-Nite Bridge Diner. R—— had seen the diner glinting like cheap tin beyond the bridge ramp. He parked and locked his car and went inside. Lights bright as a dentist's office, booths with ripped vinyl seats and Formica-topped tables and full-color plastic photos of giant cheeseburgers with french fries, hot dogs, and pie. R—— was dying of thirst. R—— was hungry, ravenous. There

[illegible] counter. [illegible] leaving him [illegible] beginning [illegible] stopped up. [illegible] It was [illegible] for a long time. He was still wearing his gloves, which meant that he hadn't it hadn't happened. And [illegible] and his adversary were both [illegible] had it happened, and that was why his blood beat so strangely? Why he was so hungry, as if he hadn't eaten and maybe he hadn't for a day or more? In one of the torn vinyl booths a young couple paused in their conversation to look at R——. On a stool at the counter a middle-aged black man in a security guard's uniform regarded R—— sidelong with a wary expression. In a foggy mirror behind the counter was a male face, fierce and heated. The skin was waxy but flushed in patches, as if he'd been slapped. The eyes were bloodshot and dilated. A man in his mid- or late thirties, in a canvas jacket open at the throat, hadn't shaved in some time so his beard was pushing out like barbed wires glinting gray. In the rifle scope he'd seen the subject's face, clean-shaven, that look of hope. Pomp-combed hair that's thinning, rubbing and slapping at face to bring a little life to it. *He's become. I must become it.*

Behind the counter was a dark-haired waitress of about forty with a red lipstick smile determined to be friendly and welcoming to R——, who was a stranger in the All-Nite Bridge Diner and in a state of unnatural exaltation that might've been, but didn't appear to be, alcohol- or drug-induced. The woman handed R—— a stained menu [illegible]. "How're you this evening, mister?" R—— was wiping his face with a napkin. Reasoning that if he was here, allowing these witnesses to take note of him, and if he [illegible] wearing the gloves, this [illegible] would still be in the right [illegible] so zipped up tightly in the [illegible] *Hasn't happened [illegible] over. Not yet.* R—— said, smiling at the woman. [illegible] the happiest I've been in [illegible]

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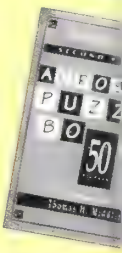
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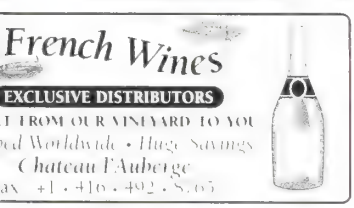
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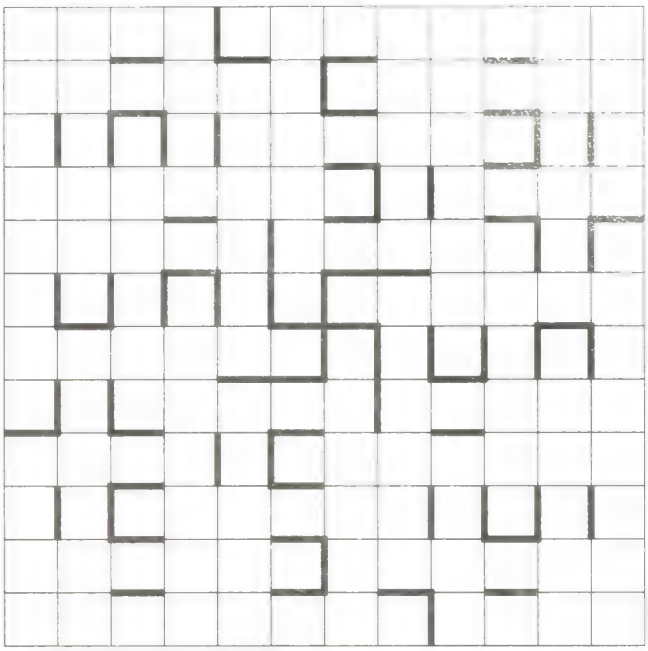
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Correction

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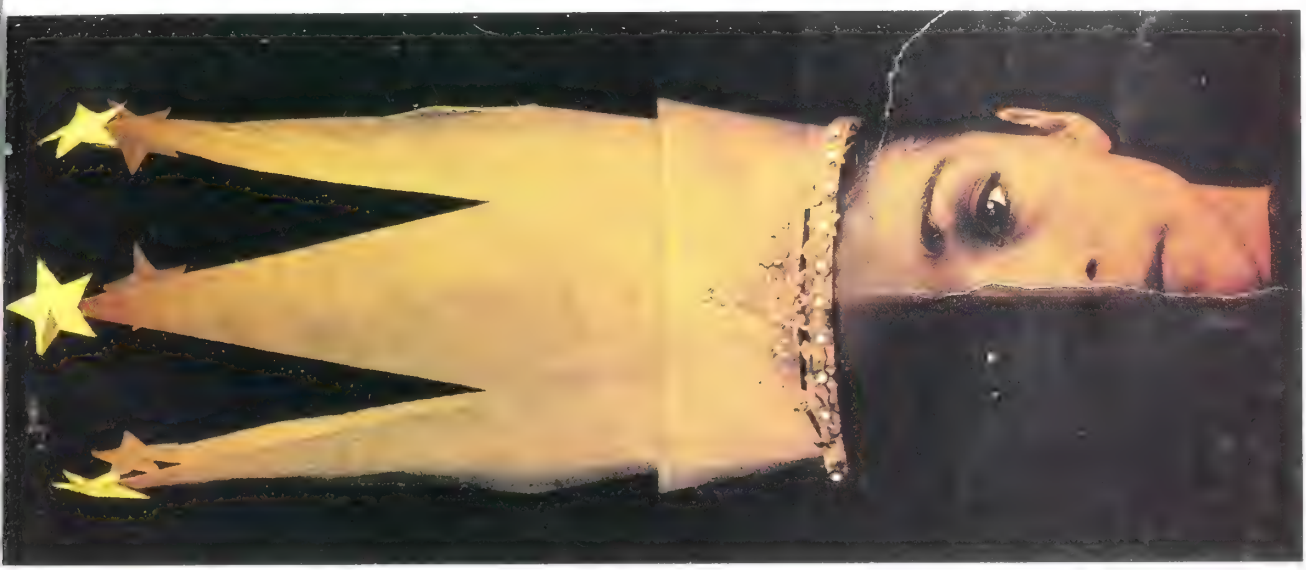


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LETTERS

Bonfire of Inanities

To the classics of digital image manipulation (Sylvester Stallone at Yalta, Marilyn Monroe on the arm of Abraham Lincoln) we can now add the June cover of *Harper's Magazine*, which attempts to represent the two poles of the magazine's literary history by bringing together none other than Mark Twain and Tom Wolfe. Wonderfully incisive, hilariously ironic, the image makes evident exactly the decline of empire Wolfe himself so strenuously bemoan[s] "In the Land of the Rococo Marxists," June]. Whereas Twain agonized endlessly over abuses of power, explaining to William Dean Howells that he simply couldn't let them pass, Wolfe sees the best of all possible worlds and cultivates his wardrobe. Whereas Twain calibrated his irony to his targets, reserving his heaviest artillery for soldier-torturing Christian God, Wolfe inflates crimes into monsters and fires away. Whereas Twain, in his day, would have used his allotted space to excoriate his country's [illegible] Congo, Wolfe seizes the moment and [illegible] his wrath to bear on . . . Stanley Fish.

[illegible]

and his cohort of "Rococo Marxists," so goes Wolfe's argument, are writing obscure, jargon-ridden articles, teaching foolishness to impressionable twenty-year-olds, establishing (horrors!) "cross-disciplinary" rather than "interdisciplinary" courses in our institutions of higher learning. Can the utopia of the proletariat be far behind? So worked up does Wolfe get defending the republic against contemptuous intellectuals (with a gratuitous kick, along the way, at Susan Sontag and Noam Chomsky) that one hesitates to tell him that the only one watching Stanley Fish drive his Jaguar around campus, long scarf blowing "à la Théophile Gautier" in the academic breeze, is Tom Wolfe.

Twain understood that the American experiment stands squarely on the backs of its critics, however irritating. Tom Wolfe terrets out the naysayers (of whom Twain, were he alive, would certainly be one) and puts them on the rack. How Twain himself might have felt about all this we can only guess from his expression on the *Harper's* cover, and the fact that he seems quietly intent on setting fire to Wolfe's cane with his cigar.

Mark Stoddard
Brewster, N.Y.

As this "sweaty little colonial" and "Rococo Marxist" deigns to climb down from his ivory penthouse in order to jump into his Jaguar for an emergency meeting of

he "Young Turks," I am still wondering whether Tom Wolfe's ravings on the Second American Century are comic parodies of whether he has in fact become Sherman McCoy, the reckless antihero of his novel *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. If pretension and poor argumentation are the hallmarks of "the Intellectual," then Wolfe's petulant whining about how intellectual skepticism is eclipsing our otherwise unhindered view of America's triumphant march into its second century of domination is a much better example of those characteristics than the work of Stanley Fish, Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, and the others he cites could ever be.

Does Wolfe really think that academic intellectuals are all like Fish and Butler? Most universities are still bastions of "fools" (to employ Wolfe's distinctions), who not only decide tenure and promotion for us "Turks" but also refuse to engage in contemporary debate, preferring instead to wrap themselves comfortably in the robes of an arrogant conservatism passing as "tradition," "the liberal arts," or—ironically—"the intellectual life." This desperate clinging to privilege often makes them the worst teachers on campus, simply because they refuse to acknowledge, much less enter into, the world of their students. In that world—my students tell me—there is no point in trying to resist consumer capitalism, because even that resistance will be commodified and sold back to them. They do not vote, because the electoral process is bought and sold in hotel and office suites that they will never inhabit. To claim, as Wolfe does, that "Theory" is the culprit here reeks of bad faith and scapegoating.

Greg Salvio
Huntingdon College
Montgomery, Ala.

Tom Wolfe's "Rococo Marxists" is sure to dazzle anyone too young to remember the Reagan Administration. Those of us who were unimpressed with the Bonzo show the first time around, however, are even less likely to empathize with the victims.

Reading Wolfe's essay, I could almost feel the Gipper's presence. All the Great Tropes of 1985 are here: an imperial hegemony (evil academics with foreign-sounding names). Willful confusion of the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany. Anecdotal personalities smelling strongly of fiction (those cruise-ship bound contractors, and that undergrad bemoaning the inability of her word processor to handle "womyn"). And 1985-est of all, an unseemly attention to what everyone is wearing. If this is what we have to look forward to in the Second American Century, book me a seat on the next exploding space shuttle.

And lest I come off sounding like one of Wolfe's villainous intellectuals, spouting hot air while contributing nothing to human enlightenment, let me inform that beleaguered women's-studies major (if indeed she exists) that she can disable those wavy red lines by unchecking the "Check spelling as you type" preference in the "Spelling & Grammar" tab, found under Microsoft Word options.

Luke Lugo
Northampton, Mass.

Tom Wolfe is exactly right: intellectuals are never unabashedly patriotic. They are too busy doing what intellectuals (as opposed to, say, bombastic novelists) do: fretting. They fret because of the huge gap in wages between the professional class and the working class. They worry because in spite of the Civil Rights Movement, antagonism still exists between races. They are concerned by the fate of American cities and the increasing violence and superficiality of American culture. And concerned is exactly what they ought to be. What has made America great is not strictly our drive toward manifest destiny, our striving for perfection, our outstanding achievements, it is those things coupled with an ability to wonder whether what we are doing is right and whom it benefits. When Americans, and especially intellectuals

[illegible] democracy.

[illegible]

Men in White

[illegible] that nothing's changed in 150 years: the only literary people deemed worth noting are white men in white suits. I have covered with dust [illegible] under cots—the fact that white men are valued by American society above all other.

Where are the women? Where are the people of color?

Hope Marston
Eugene, Ore.

Styron's Voice

The comments by Russell Banks ["Who Will Tell the People?" June] on the angry response by black intellectuals to my "noble but (in literary terms) flawed *Confessions of Nat Turner*" are themselves flawed by misinformation. Banks states that it was the "absurd implausibility" of the narrative voice that aroused the wrath of black critics, rather than any "unconscious racism" on my part; but the exact reverse was true.

The narrative voice of *Nat Turner* may or may not be implausible (a multitude of readers over thirty years has apparently found the voice persuasive), but such a literary matter was of negligible concern to the attackers of the book, among them many fierce objections was, in fact, my [illegible] racism as in such written remarks as Styron's "vile racist imagination."

Slanders like this, not any nonsense about narrative voice, dominated the hysteric assault which revealed that blacks could be every bit as bigoted as the rest of us. [illegible] cocksure contention. As the [illegible] guished African-American writer Henry Louis Gates Jr. [illegible] recently [illegible], reviewing [illegible] long ago attack [illegible] perhaps [illegible]

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[illegible]

Vanessa-Mae [illegible]

Yehudi Menuhin [illegible]

Kristen Flagstad/Lauritz Melchior Love Duet from [illegible]



Kennedy [illegible] from *The Four Seasons* [illegible]

Jacqueline du Pre Adagio [illegible] 1005

Ignaz Jan Paderewski Beethoven Sonata no. 14 in [illegible]

George Gershwin "Sweet [illegible]

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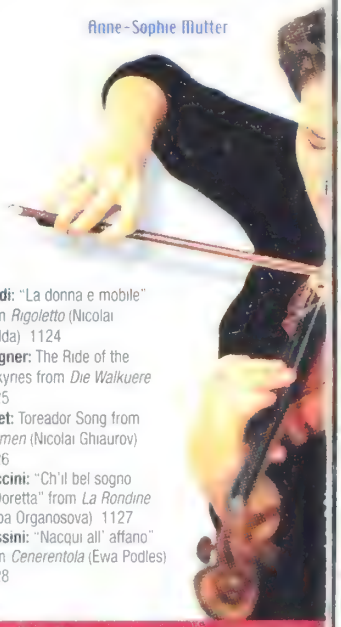
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NOTEBOOK

School bells

By Lewis H. Lapham

Education is a companion which no misfortune can depress, no crime can destroy, no enemy can alienate, no despotism can enslave. At home a friend, abroad an introduction, in solitude a solace, and in society an ornament. . . . Without it, what is man? A splendid slave, a reasoning savage.

—Joseph Addison

Between the winter primary campaigns and the summer nominating conventions the two principal candidates for president discovered much to their dismay and seasonable surprise—"the crisis of literacy" in the nation's public schools. The opinion polls were showing 76 percent of the respondents more concerned about the shambles of American education than about any other problem on the political agenda, and for nearly three months on any evening's news broadcast if Al Gore wasn't to be found seated on a tiny classroom chair in North Carolina or Ohio, George Bush was to be seen reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to kindergarten children in California or Wisconsin.

The photo op was always smiling, the lesson invariably grim. The boys and girls weren't learning how to read, didn't know the difference between an aardvark and an anarchist, couldn't count to twenty or point to California on a map. The time had come to do something "bold" and "innovative," maybe even something "revolutionary," about the rising flood of ignorance that threatened to spill over the sandbags of the American dream. Unless everybody began to pay attention to the instructions on the blackboard, the United States could lose it all—the cruise missiles and the stock options, the ball game and the farm.

The news was bad but not unfamiliar. For the last twenty years the communiqués from the nation's classrooms have resembled the casualty reports from a lost war. Ever since the early hours of the Reagan Administration, anxious committees have been publishing statements about the dwindling supplies of verbal aptitude and mathematical comprehension, about the urgent need for more money and better teachers, about next semester's redesign of special programs for the poor, the foolish, the outnumbered, and the inept.

The expressions of alarm I take to be a matter of pious ritual, like a murmuring of prayers or the beating of ornamental gongs. If as a nation we wished to improve the performance of the schools, I assume that we could do so. Certainly we possess the necessary resources. We are an energetic people, rich in money and intelligence, capable of making high-performance automobiles and venture-capital funds, and if our intentions were anything other than ceremonial, I don't doubt that we could bring the schools to the standard of efficiency required of a well-run amusement park. Over the last twenty years we have added $10 trillion to the sum of the national wealth, cloned monkeys, reconfigured the weather, multiplied (by factors too large to calculate) the reach and value of the Internet.

Why, then, do the public schools continue to decay while at the same time the voices of the proctors poking through the wreckage continue to rise to the pitch of lamentations for the dead? Possibly because the condition of the public schools is neither an accident nor a mistake. The schools as presently constituted serve the interests of a society content to define education as a means of indoctrination and a way of teaching people to know their place. We have one set of schools for the children of the elite, another for children less fortunately born, and why disrupt the seating arrangement with a noisy shuffling of chairs? Serious reform of the public schools would beg too many questions about racial prejudice, the class system, the division of the nation's spoils. A too well-educated public might prove more trouble than it's worth, and so we mask our tacit approval of an intellectually inferior result with the declaration of a morally superior purpose. The sweet words come easy and cheap, and, if often enough repeated, they gain the weight of hard decision and accomplished fact.

On their tours of the country's schoolrooms, candidates Bush and Gore produced lists of brisk suggestion, stressing the principle of "accountability" (on the part of teachers as well as students and state legislatures), underlining the importance of frequent quizzes, recommending additions to the cafeteria, improvements for the gym. Here [illegible] well have been scattering, [illegible] dispensing incense. That they had little intention [illegible] could be interested [illegible] of money [illegible]

tributor of educational services that provides impoverished school districts with computers, television sets, and access to the Internet. The schools in turn deliver a captive audience of 12 million students obliged to watch, every day, ten minutes of news programming and two minutes of commercial advertising. ZapMe!, another company that supplies educational paraphernalia, requires a million students in forty-five states to spend four hours a day in front of a computer screen that flashes commercial messages in the lower left-hand corner while they do their studies or browse the Internet. Three times a year they must bring their parents a marketing packet that installs the same software in their computers at home.

The United States is the only country in the civilized world that grants the commercial interests unfettered access to the minds of its children, and it should come as no surprise that the reading skills of American students improve during their primary-school years and then rapidly decline. Once inducted into a sixth- or seventh-grade classroom they make less progress than their peers in Britain, France, Germany, or Spain. The instruction in the uses of the Internet prepares the class for the art of shopping, not for the art of reading.

The official mourners at the bier of American public education never fail to say something sad about "abbreviated attention spans" and the "diminished capacity to think," and apparently it never occurs to them that both those habits of mind sustain the profits of the credit-card industry and the banks.

Nor does it occur to them that if much of what passes for education in the United States deadens the desire for learning, the achievement is deliberate. High schools in large cities possess many of the same attributes as minimum-security prisons—metal detectors in the corridors, zero tolerance for rowdy behavior, the principal a warden and the faculty familiar with the syllabus of confiscated weapons. Defined as day-care centers for the restless poor, the schools regulate the supply of unskilled labor, holding adolescents off the market

ntil they have been hobbled by the pe of debt and injected with the irus of unbridled appetite for goods d services they can't afford to buy. The double bind instills the attitudes f passivity and apprehension, which n turn induce the fear of authority nd the habits of obedience. An active intelligence tends to ask too any rude questions—of doctors and olticians, of the loan officer at the ortgage company or the nice man t the police station—and the hools do what they can to hold it r ransom and keep it at bay. A recent study conducted by the U.S. epartment of Education found one ird of the country's teachers lack g a thorough knowledge of the abject in which they give instruction, textbooks that satisfy the requirements of ideological doctrine rather than of literary expression inoculate he class against the danger of reading. To learn to read is to learn to hink, possibly to discover the trength and freedom of one's own and. Not a discovery that the consumer society wishes too many of its ustomers to make. Few pleasures equal the joy of the mind when it's eing put to creative use, but the ommercial markets have an interest n promoting the line of costly synthetics, and against the powers of he individual imagination they offer prescription drugs and prerecorded reams.

Every now and then a hint of what's afoot shows up in the television advertisements selling the miracle of a cell phone or a retirement nvestment fund, and I can still remember seeing (last year or maybe the year before) a Merrill Lynch commercial that put the proposition bout as plainly as it can be put.

The cautionary tale opens on the tage of a grammar school auditorium. t is prize day, and the principal on he podium is handing out a scroll. For the best science report, Neil Gallagher and his team for 'Twenty-our Hours in the Life of a Trout.'" Gallagher is a fat kid, a nerd aged nine or ten, his teammates, a black oy and two white girls, stand and mile. Close-up shots of other kids, all nerds, applauding wildly. Gallagher huffles off the stage, and the principal welcomes a very pretty girl, white and rosy-cheeked, a picture-perfect eleven-year-old wearing a charming necklace and an elegant dress.

"And finally, this year's winner, Robin Van Ness and the Merrill Lynch team, for their report 'Investment Strategies for Today's Bio-Technology Market.'"

Robin smiles as winsomely as a beauty queen, and the surprised kids in the first five rows turn around in their seats to see four handsome adults standing in the back of the auditorium—except for the principal, the only other adults present. The Merrill Lynch team. Way cool, very smooth. The team (two white men, a black man, a white woman in an Armani suit) glows with parental happiness and pride. Expressions of amazement on the faces of the kids, who have seen a great light. Wonderful day for Robin. Wonderful day for American education. Loud applause, students rise to their feet and the hummer pulls to the top of the crystal, the words, "Now everyone can access the thinking of the world's most trusted research team." The Merrill Lynch logo fills the screen, the voice-over reiterates and adds saying, "ml dot-com: the smartest place to invest online."

End of lesson, boys and girls, and nothing more to learn. Why learn, mound with pentakes, treat when the swell people at Merrill Lynch can make you rich enough to buy a river in Montana? Why waste the trouble of learning how to read when you can grow up to be president of the United States without even knowing how to write a grammatical sentence?

Candidates Bush and Gore voiced their alarm about the failure of American education in such feeble modes of language that they revised their own messages about "the crisis of literacy." What crisis? If the language of politics becomes the matter of sound bites, and if the electorate doesn't object to the secession of the intellectuals to the right to the interests of the poor, asks for little else except the comfort of being constantly amused, believes the Times should print the invincible missile shield, who cares what illiterates read or write? A summation devoutly to be wished. ■

AS FEATURED IN *HARPER'S*

Two guys on the road with one brain between them

DRIVING Mr. Albert

A TRIP ACROSS AMERICA WITH EINSTEIN'S BRAIN

by MICHAEL PATERNITI

A remarkable true road trip, with a brilliant young writer at the wheel, an eccentric pathologist as his navigator, and, in a container in the trunk, the most celebrated brain of our time.

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—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review



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HARPER'S INDEX

Amount by which last year's WTO accord is projected to increase annual U.S. grain sales to China: $1,500,000,000
Percentage of last year's U.S. grain sales to the European Union this represents: 96
Percentage of national forestland unprotected under the President's proposed ban on road construction: 75
Miles of new roads that the ban would allow in Alaska's Tongass National Forest: 50
Acres of redwoods saved by Julia "Butterfly" Hill, after her two-year residence in a tree: 3
Amount her foundation paid Pacific Lumber to spare the trees: $50,000
Maximum suggested donation for a week's course in civil disobedience at Canada's clandestine Co-Motion Action Camp: $425
Price of a two-week stay at California's Entrepreneurship Camp, for ages 9 through 16: $1,995
Chance that a contestant who's appeared on ABC's *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* has won a million dollars: 1 in 67
Chance that a contestant who appeared on the show's British precursor ever won a million pounds: 0
Number of entertainment award ceremonies scheduled to be held in the U.S. this year: 332
Number of states that declared last August 8 "National Admit You're Happy Day": 19
Average number of seconds it takes to complete a transaction at a Wendy's drive-through: 150.29
Rank of a Starbucks store locator among the most commonly downloaded non-email Palm Pilot applications: 1
Number of months last spring that a Louisiana town's sewage lines were connected to its fresh water supply: 3
Gallons of bourbon that flowed into the Kentucky River last May during a fire at a Wild Turkey warehouse: 200,000
Percentage of the trailers provided North Carolina's Hurricane Floyd victims last fall that were still in use in May: 56
Percentage of refugees from the Bosnian war who have not returned to their homes since 1995's peace accord: 80
Estimated number of years it will take to remove the 600,000 active mines in Bosnia-Herzegovina: 30 (see page 88)
Minimum number of Haitian politicians assassinated since 1994's U.S. military intervention: 8
Bounty placed on the head of any U.S. DEA agent last January by Mexico's Juárez drug cartel: $200,000
Percentage change since 1995 in the number of assaults against federal officers patrolling the California border: +617
Number of semiautomatic paint-ball rifles ordered by the LAPD in preparation for this month's Democratic convention: 40
Amount New Jersey's Camden police spent on riot gear in preparation for Philadelphia's GOP convention: $47,775
Number of years remaining in Pat Buchanan's "political life," according to Buchanan: 10
Minimum amount President Clinton's pension and staff will cost U.S. taxpayers if his life span is average: $6,072,000
Ratio of the number of corporate mergers signed under the Clinton Administration to those signed under Reagan: 3:1
Number of prizes in economics ever funded by the Nobel Foundation: 0
Number funded "in memory of Alfred Nobel" by the Bank of Sweden: 31
Percentage of public relations executives who say they have "had to lie" in the course of their jobs: 25
Distance that the silver-spotted skipper caterpillar can propel its own feces, in feet: 5
Number of leaf cutter ants required to haul a 10-pound picnic basket: 60,153
Number of hours at 95°F it takes for egg salad to go bad: 4.6
Percentage change in the gonorrhea rate among teens and young adults when the beer tax is raised by 20 cents: –9
Percentage of U.S. teenagers who say they have engaged in oral sex: 55
Percentage who consider the practice "gross": 55
Average number of words in the written vocabulary of a 6- to 14-year-old American child in 1945: 25,000
Average number today: 10,000
Ratio of the number of words for the color blue in Maya to the number in Spanish: 3:1 (see page 35)
Estimated number of fireflies it would take to generate the visible brightness of the sun: 14,286,000,000

Figures cited [illegible]

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READINGS

[Analysis]

THE STAR WARS CONSPIRACY

From a May 11 letter to White House chief of staff John Podesta from Theodore A. Postol, a physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and former scientific adviser to the chief of naval operations, who helped develop the Trident-2 missile. The letter was turned over to the Pentagon's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, the agency responsible for the Clinton Administration's $60 billion National Missile Defense program, which promptly classified the letter and its appendices. President Clinton will decide in the fall whether to deploy the antimissile system. Russian president Vladimir Putin has warned that if the United States deploys such a system, thereby violating the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty, Russia will no longer adhere to other arms-control treaties.

Dear Mr. Podesta:

I am writing to alert you to information that is of profound importance to President Clinton's impending decision on whether to deploy the National Missile Defense system currently under development. I have obtained and analyzed the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization's (BMDO's) own published data from the Integrated Flight Test-1A (IFT-1A) and have discovered that the BMDO's own data shows that the Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicle will be defeated by the simplest of balloon decoys. I also have documentation that shows that the BMDO in coordination with its contractors attempted to hide this fact by tampering with both the data and analysis from the IFT-1A experiment. In addition, it appears that the BMDO modified the configuration of the IFT-2, -3, and -4 follow-on flight tests to hide the program-stopping facts revealed in the IFT-1A. The documentation and analysis that support my claims are attached to this letter as Attachments A through D.

In the remainder of this letter I will briefly summarize the findings documented in the four attachments. Attachments A and B explain how the BMDO's own data from the IFT-1A test shows that the BMDO falsely represented the results of the IFT-1A test as showing that an Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicle (EKV) can tell warheads from simple balloon decoys. It is easy to understand this result from a simple explanation of how the EKV works.

The EKV sees both decoys and warheads as unresolved points of light, and it attempts to find warheads by examining how each point of light fluctuates in time. The intensity of the signal from each potentially lethal object depends on its size, temperature, surface materials, and spatial orientation; and the fluctuation in the signal from each object depends on how its orientation changes in time. The data from the IFT-1A experiment showed that the changing spatial orientation of the decoys and warheads as they fell through the near vacuum of space was nearly the same, each resulting in a signal that fluctuated in a varied and unpredictable way. Consequently, the IFT-1A [illegible] showed that there was no fluctuation [illegible] the signals from decoys and warheads [illegible]



performing the post-flight analysis dealt with this failure by simply removing the balloon from the data, as if it were never there. Even after removing the balloon, the post-flight ex-

were brighter, and instead chose without tech-

results were supported by well-established sci-

were like

uld reliably predict when a

interferences procedures used by the analysis team were applied because the IFT-1A data revealed that the signals from some of the decoys in the experiment were essentially indistinguishable from that of the mock warhead. Stated differently, the signals from both the warhead and balloons had no features that could be exploited to tell one from the other using credible scientific methods—so the team invented a set of fraudulent methods to get the desired result.

In view of the results of the IFT-1A experiment, it is now clear why the IFT-2, 3, and 4 experiments were reconfigured following the analysis of IFT-1A. After the IFT-1A experiment, the BMDO trimmed the number of objects it planned to fly in follow-on experiments from ten to four. The four objects were to be a medium reentry vehicle (MRV), a 2.2-meter-diameter balloon, and two balloons with a 0.6-meter diameter. Some time after this reduction in the number of objects to be flown in IFT-2, 3, and 4 experiments, the number of objects was again changed. This time the two 0.6-meter balloons were removed, because of the high probability that the seeker would mistake them for the mock warhead. This action reduced the number of objects for the IFT-2, 3, and 4 follow-on experiments from four to two, leaving only a single large balloon

The fidelity of the IFT-2, 3, and 4 experiments was further undermined by the BMDO



'Incinerated Space at the World Trade Center,' At Night, 1985. *Both paintings were replaced by a new work by Kent Monkman.* Courtesy

behind the EKV illuminating the balloon and warhead from the front. In this experimental geometry, the willful insertion of the 2.2-meter-diameter balloon converted it from what otherwise might have been a credible decoy to an object that was unambiguously a beacon. In addition, the very large differences in the intensity between the balloon and warhead made it easy to distinguish between the two targets while at the same time making it easier for the EKV to home in on the dimmer but still very bright warhead near the balloon.

The results of the IFT-1A experiment, and the way they were allowed to influence the modifications to the IFT-2, 3, and 4 experiments, are of profound significance for the President's decision on whether or not to move forward with the current National Missile Defense concept, since it is now clear that the entire concept relies on a flawed analysis of the most basic and critical flight-test data. When the data from these experiments are properly analyzed and interpreted, they indicate that the current NMD system will not be able to reliably deal with even the most simple first-generation countermeasures. Such trivially simple countermeasures could include the use of tumbling warheads, partially inflated balloon decoys, and decoys and warheads constructed with tethered objects and "rabbit-ear"–type appendages.

The points made herein can be readily verified by a careful review of the study "Independent Review of TRW Discrimination Techniques Final Report." This document (included here as Attachment D) contains a mix of irrelevant and profound findings about the post-flight analysis of the telemetry data, creating a superficial but false impression of a sound scientific analysis. A careful reading of this report and the related documents included in the attachments instead reveals the following:

- Data that demonstrated that the EKV would always mistake a partially inflated balloon for the mock lethal object was inexplicably removed from the post-flight analysis of the EKV's performance.
- After this data was removed, the data from the eight other remaining benign objects and the lethal mock warhead showed that the system would still mistakenly choose two of the benign objects instead of the lethal object.
- In order to alter this undesired outcome, the team tampered with both the data and the analysis of the data to artificially create a false outcome where the system would choose the mock warhead.

This highly organized and systematic pattern of actions has the appearance of an elaborate scientific and technical blunder, which urgently needs to be investigated by a team of scientists who are recognized for their scientific accomplishments and independence from the Pentagon. Fortunately, the physical phenomena and analysis techniques at issue here are well known to many highly skilled independent [illegible] who work on problems in [illegible] physics, computer science, and the analysis [illegible]

[illegible] top-notch independent scientists who can evaluate the [illegible] and to also [illegible] the proper [illegible]

I urge the White House to put together such a team of scientists who can independently evaluate the procedures used to reach these erroneous conclusions about the content of the telemetry data from the IFT-1A flight test and the subsequent modifications of the IFT-2, 3, and 4 flight test. Attachments A, B, C, and D contain detailed explanations of the findings provided in this letter along with the documentation from which they are derived.

Sincerely yours,
Theodore A. Postol

[Argument]

CONSCIENTIOUS DESTRUCTION

[illegible] for Sarah Zelter, who represented herself in the Greenock, Scotland, trial of Zelter, [illegible] and Ellie Mooney. The three were [illegible] with destruction of property [illegible] Trident 2 nuclear submarine control facility and destroying laboratory and computer [illegible]. Moments after Crown [illegible] acquittals were given, proving that Trident 2 nuclear weapons are illegal under international law [illegible]. Subsequently several members of Parliament have [illegible].

We start with the common law defense of coercion and necessity. In Scots law the defense [illegible] where the accused has done something that [illegible] by the enormity of the [illegible] be permitted to [illegible] property [illegible] person in order to [illegible]. The concept that one should [illegible] the lesser of two evils or breaking the law prevents more evil than it has caused is an essential and basic part of common law.

Other judges facing a similar dilemma over [illegible] peace protest [illegible] acquitted [illegible] Illinois in [illegible] the jury to follow [illegible] nuclear weapons [illegible] crime becomes [illegible] international law [illegible] crime [illegible] and [illegible]

ants and poisoning its targets by radiation." Also, more recently, June 8, 1999, eight activists who peacefully blockaded traffic into a U.S. Trident submarine base were found not guilty when the judge told the jury to consider in their deliberations the fact that international treaties supersede local, state, and federal law.

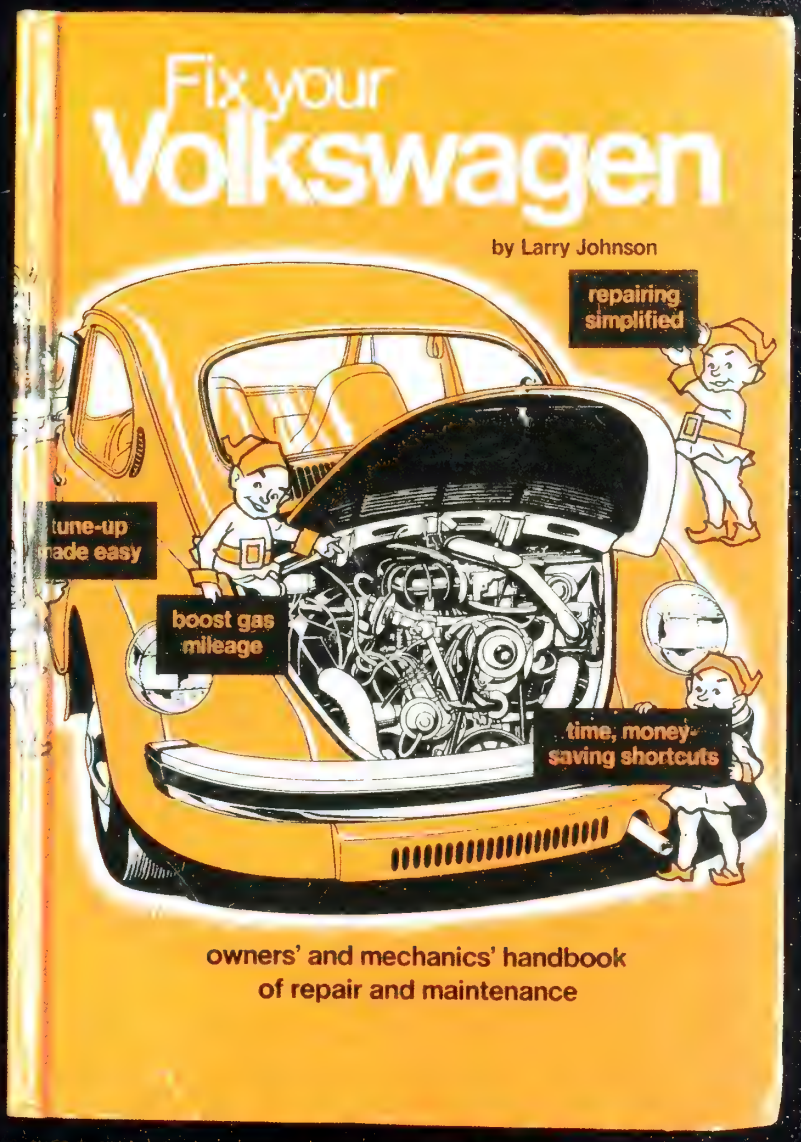
There are six elements to proving that I did not act willfully and maliciously. One, preventing a crime is a reasonable defense in Scots law. Two, international law is relevant in Scotland. Three, the threat and use of Trident nuclear weapons is a crime in international law. Four, I honestly believe this crime was being committed and was imminent. Five, I really do believe there was a practical link between my action and the prevention of the crime and, six, my action was reasonable under the circumstances: I had considered alternative courses of action, and I could not do anything else effectively to prevent the crime.

It is every citizen's right and duty to try to uphold international law and prevent war crimes and crimes against peace. Every person around the world possesses the basic human right to be free from the criminal practice of nuclear deterrents and its concomitant specter of nuclear extinction. All human beings possess the basic human right under international law to engage in nonviolent civil resistance to prevent, impede, or terminate the ongoing commission of these international crimes by government officials in the world's nuclear states.

The Nuremberg Charter authorizes me to act in order to prevent the commission of crimes recognized under international law. That international law imposes duties and liabilities upon individuals as well as states has long been recognized. Crimes against international law are committed by men, not by abstract entities, and only by punishing individuals who commit such crimes can the provisions of international law be enforced. International law as such binds every citizen just as ordinary municipal law does. Acts adjudged criminal when done by an officer of government are criminal when done by a private individual; the guilt differs only in magnitude, not in quality.

If international law punishes individuals for complicity in the commission of war crimes, crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, and offenses against the peace and security of mankind, then by inference international law must authorize individuals to prevent those crimes. In the case of the German industrialist who was found guilty at Nuremberg for supplying Zyklon B to the Nazis, it is quite obvious that any responsible citizen who had tried to prevent the gas from reaching the chambers or to prevent the research from taking place, even

June 8, 1976. Lost during long, strange trip.



April 3, 2000. Find on Alibris...whoa.

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years of hard labor for me to discover and invent MYSELF, and now I wish to protect my invention from unauthorized exploitation, ge-

With reference to the guidelines, I can state

I am now. I have led a private existence and I have not made the invention of MYSELF public. I have not yet opened it as MYSELF publicly. I have remained hidden.

I am not obvious.

I have taken several important and inventive steps in order to come up with MYSELF.

I have many industrial applications, not only in terms of the things I can make, do, or produce as a multiskilled human female but also in terms of my parts. For example, my genes can be used in medical research to extremely profitable ends. I therefore wish to have sole control of my own genetic material.

I may be industrially reproduced by suitably knowledgeable persons in the form of clones of MYSELF, in whole or in part. I wish to give MYSELF full protection from such an eventuality.

I am not merely a discovery or an aesthetic creation. I am more than the sum of my abstract aspects. And quite clearly I have physical features.

I do not find MYSELF in your definitions of "excluded inventions."

Briefly, I could describe MYSELF as an invention engaged in the continual process of solving the problem of its own existence—both physically and phenomenologically. During this process I have succeeded in solving the problem of my parents, whom I have now overcome. At thirty years old, approaching the middle of life's way, I am now my own invention, wholly responsible for and to myself, a fully realized individual. In the next two decades, I look forward to resolving a larger parenting issue, involving the problem of the presence or absence of an interventionist God. I also anticipate the dawning of certain eschatological truths—though I cannot provide a time frame for this.

On a day-to-day basis, I solve a variety of problems, ranging from the elevated to the mundane. I function tolerably well as a member of a group of friends, as a member of a family, as a member of a workforce, and as a member of society generally. As a human female, I am also able, with the assistance of something I scraped from a gym sock, to propagate the species.

I am a single, human female, without children, five feet and three inches tall, with [illegible] I was born in Canada on, as I was informed recently, "almost the same date as David Bowie." I am around eight and a half [illegible] and I have a weak right eye

I AM THAT I AM

Biotechnology companies have requested and received patents for different plant and

owner, the sole proprietor, of MYSELF, my

possible that a corporation might legally claim

unless I can translate them into

in a hard-headed, businesslike manner.'

Both my eyes are blue. I take a size five in footwear. I have no distinguishing scars, marks, or moles, and my gait is not particularly unusual. I am in rude health. As a direct result of an ill-advised bungee jump in 1996, I now suffer acutely from vertigo. I do not drive.

The accompanying illustrations show MYSELF to be an excellent example of a human being. The bones of MYSELF are all present and connected in the correct sequence. The limbs are supple and obedient to the will of MYSELF. The physical features on the face are my own. I am alive and my genes are MYSELF. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further diagrams or any additional proofs that I am that I am. Tissue samples or fingerprints may be provided.

[Poem]

CRAQUELURE

By Tom Paulin from The Wind Dog, *published by Faber and Faber, an affiliate of Farrar, Straus and Giroux*

A term—technical term—
with no allure
—not unctuous not brittle
like pork crackling
so there's the usual question—
why bother?
except it's the germ
—like seeds in a mummy's stomach—
of whatever
for clearly this is an antiquarian
subject that's irredeemably
committed to the letter
and fixed like bone ache
or too clipped a metre
—it's like writing about the worm
in the apple
a worm that's all dry skin
and not pliable
—like choosing that instead of a dippling
branch or its blossom
or four greeny blue eggs in a nest
eggs that'll one day—now I see—
crack open
so I'll turn
to the River Quoile at neap tide
a dusty car rug on the grass
where
each with an easel and a sketchpad
my mother and her friend Kathleen
are painting watercolours
of the diminished river
—a skitt of rain
comes so close
it nearly spots their paintings
as swans go skidding and sliding
and splashing along the blue water as they land
and the light and the air
are nutfresh open chittery

the muddy estuary
—mud not sand
has a dull wet mouldy vegetable smell
like dead soup
or the inside of a cracked downpipe
or a broken drain
—I find a clay more clay than earthen
ware bottle in the mud
and in the bottom of the bottle
I can make out a dead scaldy
—a fledgling—
or at least think I can
—it's a creature neither invented
nor dreamed up
—just found
and in its being found small
banal and scruffy
on these somehow banal mudflats
but then—I'm ten years of age
if it can almost terrify
the scaldy mightn't really exist
it mightn't be in this cold nest
which is therefore a bottle with a smell
but no message

[Apologia]

TOO LEGIT TO QUIT

From an email interview with Dave Eggers in the Summer issue of The Harvard Advocate, *a student literary publication. Eggers is the editor of* McSweeney's *magazine, his memoir,* A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius, *was published in January*

[illegible] Selling out? Good? Bad? Not the issue? What has surprised you about your book's reception—in addition, I suppose, to its phenomenal success? How do you explain the backlash to all the hype about you? It doesn't seem to be about your work but more about you. Simple jealousy? Media saturation? How does it differ from other pop media backlashes?

DAVE EGGERS: I address the "sellout" word later on (see addendum). As for the so-called

or quiet one, because it hasn't shown up on my radar.

Are you taking any steps—are there any steps to be taken—to keep this real?

Scott Hendrix

CAH: Have you optioned or considered optioning the movie or television rights to *A Hamburger Today*? Who would you like to see star (specifically or cast-wise) and direct? If it became a television series would it be an hour-long drama, half-hour sitcom (with laugh track or without?), or some hybrid?

If I'd been asked in another, less glib way, I would have answered.

[illegible]

I actually asked him the question "Are you taking any steps to keep this real?" I want you to look back on that time as being a time when this word came out of your mouth. Oh. There was a time when such a question—albeit probably without the colloquial spin—would have originated from my own brain. Since I was thirteen, sitting in my orange-carpeted bedroom in ostensibly cutting-edge Lake Forest, Illinois, subscribing to *The Village Voice* and reading the entire issues of *Spin* the minute I had them in my hands, I had my ear to the railroad tracks of avant-garde America. I was always monitoring, with the most sensitive and well-calibrated apparatus, the degree of selloutitude [illegible]

I thought I'd [illegible] I knew I was when a friend of mine thought I had found and I had [illegible] Then I watched, with greater and greater dismay, as [illegible] people [illegible] stupid people, and my moron neighbor who [illegible]

But it was the band's fault, too. They [illegible] I [illegible] I [illegible] Had they changed? Had the [illegible] ing art with integrity changed? I didn't [illegible] inverse relationship with what you term the [illegible]

became slightly popular they were sellouts. Bob Dylan appeared on MTV and of course was a sellout. Recently, just at dinner tonight, after a huge, sold-out reading by David Sedaris and Sarah Vowell (both sellouts), I was sitting next to [illegible] a very smart [illegible] married to the singer-songwriter of a very well-known band. I mentioned that I had seen The Flaming Lips the night before. She rolled her eyes. "Oh I really liked them on *90210*," she sneered, assuming that that would put me and the band in our respective places.

However. Was she aware that The Flaming Lips had composed an album requiring the simultaneous playing of four separate discs, on four separate CD players? Was she aware that the band had once, for a show at Lincoln Center, handed out to audience members something like 100 portable tape players, with 100 different tapes, and had them all played at the same time, creating a symphonic sort of effect, one which completely devastated everyone in attendance? I went on and on to her about the band's accomplishments, their experiments. Was she convinced that they were more than their one appearance with Jason Priestley? She was.

Everyone knows that *90210* is not cutting edge and that a cutting edge alternarock band should not appear on such a show. That rule is clearly stated in the obligatory engrained computer-chip sellout manual that we were all given when we hit adolescence. But this sellout manual serves only the lazy and small. Those who bestow sellouthood upon their former heroes are driven to do so by, first and foremost, the unshakable need to reduce. The average consumer is absolutely overwhelmed—as he or she should be—by the sheer volume of artistic output in every conceivable medium given to the world every day—it is simply too much to begin to process or to comprehend—and so we are forced to try to sort, to reduce. We designate, we label, we diminish, we create hierarchies and categories.

Through largely received wisdom, we rule out Tom Waits's new album because it's the same old same old, and we save $15. U2 has lost it. Radiohead is too popular. Country music is bad, Puff Daddy is bad, the last Wallace book was bad because that one reviewer said so. We decide that TV is bad unless it's *The Sopranos*. We like Rick Moody and Jonathan Lethem and Jeffrey Eugenides until they all followed their books to become movies. And on and on. The point is that we do this, and to a certain extent we must do this. We must create [illegible] to a certain extent hierarchies.

But you know what's easiest of all? When we dismiss. Oh how gloriously comforting to be

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about them. Or because it looked like the

stance where such problems actually ar

And now I am also a sellout. Here are my sins, many of which you may know about already: First, I was a sellout because *Might* magazine took ads. Then I was a sellout because I went to work for *Esquire*. Now I'm a sellout because I have let people take my picture. And because my [illegible] every fucking magazine and newspaper printed in America. And now, as far as Mc[illegible] viewer wants to know if we're also losing our [illegible] ing unknowns and pieces killed by other maga-

thought process. I saw a box. So I decided I would do a box. We were given stories by some of our favorite writers—George Saunders, Rick Moody (who is uncool, uncool), Haruki Murakami, Lydia Davis, others—and so we published them. Did I wonder if people would think we were selling out, that we were not fulfilling the mission they had assumed we had committed ourselves to? No. I did not. Nor will I ever. We just don't care. We care about doing what we want to do creatively. We want to be interested in it. We want it to challenge us. We want it to be difficult. We want to reinvent the stupid thing every time. Would I ever think, before I did something, of how those with sellout monitors would respond to this or that move? I would not. The second I sense a thought like that trickling into my brain, I will put my head under the tires of a bus.

You want to know how big a sellout I am? A few months ago I wrote an article for *Time* magazine and was paid $12,000 for it. I am about to write something, 1,000 words, three pages or so, for something called *Forbes ASAP*, and for that I will be paid $6,000. For two years, until five months ago, I was on the payroll of *ESPN* magazine, as a consultant and sometime contributor. I was paid handsomely for doing very little. Same with my stint at *Esquire*. One year I spent there, with little to no duties. I wore khakis every day. Another *Might* editor and I, for almost a year, contributed to *Details* magazine, under pseudonyms, and were paid $2,000 each for what never amounted to more than ten minutes' work—honestly never more than that. People from Hollywood want to make my book into a movie, and I am probably going to let them do so, and they will likely pay me a great deal of money for the privilege.

Do I care about this money? I do. Will I keep this money? Very little of it. Within the year I will have given away almost a million dollars to about a hundred charities and individuals, benefiting everything from hospice care to an artist who makes sculptures from Burger King bags. And the rest will be going into publishing books through McSweeney's. Would I have been able to publish McSweeney's if I had not worked at *Esquire*? Probably not. Where is the $6,000 from *Forbes* going? To a guy named Joe Polevy, who wants to write a book about the effects of radiator noise on children in New England.

Now, what if I were keeping all the money? What if I were buying property in St. Kitts or blowing it all on live-in prostitutes? What if, for example, I was, a few nights ago, sitting at a table in SoHo with a bunch of Hollywood slash celebrity acquaintances, one of whom I went to high school with, and one of whom was Puff Daddy? Would that make me a sellout? Would

[Corrections]

ET TU, BETH?

The following quotations, [illegible] between Beth Eggers, Dave Eggers's [illegible] and Craig Baum, [illegible] the Dave Eggers phenomenon on his website, My Manifesto Online. *[illegible] appeared in Baum's April 17 column.*

I am the sister who supposedly "helped out" while Dave "raised his little brother alone." Yeah right. I only picked him up from school every day, went to all the school events WITH Dave, although you'd never know it from reading all the reviews and the book. I took Chris to lacrosse practice, comic-book stores, stayed overnight at Dave's all the time because he was up all night in San Francisco doing his magazine.

What I am unhappy about is that I was the one who solely took care of my parents and Chris for a year in Chicago while they were dying (Dave came home some weekends). I took a year off from law school to do it and worked sixteen-hour days caring for two sick people while running the house and carpooling Chris, helping with homework, reading to him, etc. I sold the house, found the five of us a place to live in Berkeley the first summer, found Chris a school to go to. Maybe the reason no one is interviewing me is that I'm not listed and Dave has purposely not given out my phone number. He is still angry with me about some things—during the last year of Chris's time in California, I was going through an ugly divorce, and Dave did most of the work, and I saw very little of Chris (but that's out of SIX YEARS). Dave decided on his own to move to New York with Chris, without consulting me. It absolutely broke my heart. After that, we've had little contact. But I am listed in the will, by my mother, as Chris's legal guardian, and I participated in all the activities Dave did for six years.

Dave used my journal to refresh his recollection about many things—that's why he thanked me in the acknowledgments and probably also because he felt guilty for misrepresenting things. I still don't have the journal back. No offer of royalties. But he did take me to Mexico with my brothers for Christmas, so I guess that's something.

[illegible] I was a hater of evil? What if a few years before that I was at the home of Julian Schnabel, at a party featuring Al Pacino and Robert De Niro and at which Schnabel [illegible] I would have neither to talk about him possibly directing my movie? And what if I said sure, let's? Would all that make me a sellout? Would it have been more cool not to go to this party, or not to have written that book that interview, or to have refused millions from Hollywood?'

The thing is, I really like saying yes. I like new things, projects, plans, getting people together and doing something, trying something, even when it's convenient. I am not good at saying no. And I do not get along with people who say no. When you die, and it really could be this afternoon, under the same bus wheels I'll end my head it need be, you will not be happy about having said no. You will be kicking your ass about all the no's you've said. No to that opportunity, or no to that trip to Nova Scotia, or no to that night out, or no to that project, or no to that person who wants to be naked with you but you worry about what your friends will say.

No is for wimps. No is for pussies. No is to live small and embittered, cherishing the opportunities you missed because they might have sent the wrong message. There is a point in one's life when one cares about selling out and not selling out. One worries whether or not wearing a certain shirt means that they are behind the curve or ahead of it, or that having certain music in one's collection means that they are impressive or unimpressive. Thankfully, for some, this all passes. I am here to tell you that I have, a few years ago, found my way out of that thicket of comparison and relentless suspicion and judgment. And it is a nice feeling. Because, in the end, no one will ever give a shit who has kept shit "real" except the two or three people, sitting in their apartments, bitter and self-devouring, who take it upon themselves to wonder about such things. The keeping real of shit matters to some people, but it does not matter to me. It's fashion, and I don't like fashion, because fashion does not matter.

Do not be critics, you people, I beg you. I was a critic and I wish I could take it all back because it came from a smelly and ignorant place in me and spoke with a voice that was all rage and envy. Do not dismiss a book until you have written one, and do not dismiss a movie until you have made one, and do not dismiss a person until you have met them. It is a truckload of work to be open-minded and generous and understanding and forgiving and accepting, but, Christ, that is what matters. What matters is saying yes.

I say yes, and Wayne Coyne of The Flaming Lips says yes, and if that makes us the enemy, then good, good, good. We are evil people because we want to live and do things. We are on the wrong side because we should be home, calculating which move would be the least damaging to our downtown reputations. But I say yes because I am curious. I want to see things. I say yes when my high school friend tells me to come out because he's hanging with Puffy. A real story, that. I say yes when Hollywood says they'll give me enough money to publish a hundred different books or send twenty kids through college. Saying no is so fucking boring. And if anyone wants to hurt me for that, or dismiss me for [illegible] yes, I say, Oh, do it, do it, you motherfuckers, finally, finally, finally.

[Index]

LONG ON THE TOOTH

[illegible]

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and reentry, 113, 121–22, 152–53, 156, 160, 169
[illegible]
tumour, 111, 160, 204–5, 208, 209
[illegible]

[Assessment]

OH MY GOD, HE KILLED KENNY G!

From a June 5 posting by jazz guitarist Pat Metheny on his patmethenygroup.com in response to a fan's question about saxophonist Kenny G. Metheny's latest album is Trio 99 > 00.

Kenny G is not a musician I really had much of an opinion about until recently. There was not much about the way he played that interested me one way or the other, either live or on records. I first heard him a number of years ago playing as a sideman with Jeff Lorber when they opened a concert for my band. My impression was that he was someone who had spent a fair amount of time listening to the more pop-oriented sax players of that time, like Grover Washington or David Sanborn, but was not really an advanced player, even in that style. He had major rhythmic problems, and his harmonic and melodic vocabulary was extremely limited, mostly to pentatonic-based and blues-lick-derived patterns, and he exhibited only a rudimentary understanding of how to function as a professional soloist in an ensemble—Lorber was basically playing him off the bandstand in terms of actual music. But he did show a knack for connecting to the basest impulses of the large crowd by deploying his two or three most effective licks (holding long notes and playing fast runs—never mind that there were lots of harmonic clams in them) at key moments to elicit a powerful crowd reaction (over and over again). The other thing I noticed was that he played horribly out of tune, consistently sharp (which he does to this day).

Of course, I am aware of what he has played since, the success he has had, and the controversy that has surrounded him among musicians and serious listeners. This controversy seems to be largely fueled by the fact that he sells an enormous amount of records while not being anywhere near a really great player by the standards that have been set for his instrument over the past sixty or seventy years.

Honestly, there is no small amount of envy in musicians who see one of their fellow players doing so well financially, especially when so many of them who are far superior as improvisers and musicians have trouble simply making a living. There must be hundreds, if not thousands, of sax players around the world who are simply better improvising musicians than Kenny G. It would really improve me if I could honestly agree with that statement.

But, as I said at the top, that is [a]rchived. [M]y view was all "until recently."

Not long ago, Kenny G put out a recording where he overdubbed himself on top of a thirty-year-old Louis Armstrong record, on the track "What a Wonderful World." With that single move, Kenny G became one of the few people on earth I can say that I really can't respect at all—as a man, for his incredible arrogance to even consider such a thing, and as a musician, for presuming to share the stage with the single most important figure in our music.

This type of musical necrophilia—the technique of overdubbing on the preexisting tracks of already dead performers—was weird when Natalie Cole did it with her dad on "Unforgettable" a few years ago, but it was her dad. When Tony Bennett did it with Billie Holiday it was bizarre, but we are talking about two of the greatest singers of the twentieth century, who were on roughly the same level of artistic accomplishment. When Larry Coryell presumed to overdub himself on top of a Wes Montgomery track, I lost a lot of the respect that I had for him—and I have to seriously question the fact that I did have respect for someone who could turn out to have such unbelievably bad taste and be that disrespectful to one of my personal heroes.

Normally, I feel that musicians all have a hard enough time, regardless of their level, just trying to play well, and that they don't really benefit from public criticism, particularly from their fellow players.

But this is different. When Kenny G decided that it was appropriate for him to defile the music of the man who is probably the greatest jazz musician that has ever lived by spewing his lame-ass, jive, pseudo-bluesy, out-of-tune, noodling, wimped-out, fucked-up playing all over one of the great Louis's tracks (even one of his lesser ones), he did something that I would not have imagined to be possible. He, in one move, through his unbelievably pretentious and calloused decision to embark on this most cynical of musical paths, shit all over the graves of all the musicians past and present who have risked their lives by going out there on the road for years and years developing their own music inspired by the standards of grace that Louis Armstrong brought to every single note he played over an amazing lifetime as a musician. By disrespecting Louis, his legacy, and, by default, everyone who has ever tried to do something positive with improvised music and what it can be, Kenny G reached a new low point in modern culture. We let this slide at our own peril.

[Testimonials]

I PUT A SPERM IN YOU

[comments posted to Lesbians.com, a Website designed to attract the children of blues singer Screamin' Jay Hawkins in preparation for a family reunion this summer. Hawkins, who claimed to have fathered fifty-seven children, died in February.

I feel that I may be one of the many sons of Mr. Screamin' because I enjoy climbing in and out of coffins, as well as sticking my head through skulls on poles. Thank you.

My mom went to Atlantic City in August of 1951. My dad was out of town that month, and I was born with an extra bone (actually, cartilage) in my nose. I love the song "I Put a Spell on You."

I gots plenty of rhythm and blues, and my boss told me so.

I always have felt the Voodoo Jive is in myself! It is an innate urge. Where else does one get it? Purportedly, my mother came from the United States and abandoned me in Canada because the voodoo was put on her. I also play drums made out of skulls.

I think he's my poppa and that I was put up for adoption and given to the parents I have now. You see, I am very creative. I write, act, sing, and produce, and none of my parents do this. Hence, adoption and foster homes.

Well, me, my mother used to play these blasted blues records at all hours of the night, and often, she would get excited to watch my brother and me—so that she could go see blues bands that came through Cleveland. More often than not she would come home with a blues musician. However, one time, my mother took home a man, the man I love. I love it to bits. I fell asleep while listening. Once when I was nine, I got constipated—which I attribute to my mother's attempts at cooking various ethnic [illegible]. The point she made [illegible] made me [illegible] with corsets and [illegible]. Well, I was quite shocked. I was embarrassed and thought I was the only kid who ever had this problem. I remember telling my mother and she said, "Well, your daddy wrote a song about your problem," and she proceeded to play me a hauntingly humorous song about being constipated. Mom never [illegible] and I could [illegible] and [illegible] she [illegible] and [illegible] me like.

I don't want to be found. I know I am one of his kids. I just want my family and friends to know I'm all right and I have a great life right now.

Well, one time in 1962, when I was about ten years old, me and my mom drove across the country for twelve and a half hours just to get to one of Jay's concerts, and once we had gotten there we were sent directly to the VIP section, and I overheard my mom saying, "Jay, you need to support me with some money for Tammy's private-school education. After all, she is also your child!" And then Jay insisted on us moving in with him, but my mother knew that she would just be entering a bad environment for us. So she didn't take the offer, and Jay continued paying my private-school bills, and I saw him on holidays.

My mother attended a concert of Screamin' Jay's while visiting Harlem, New York. She made her way backstage to meet Screamin' Jay after his set, and Screamin' Jay invited her and a couple friends back to his bus. After drinking a lot, Screamin' Jay made his booty call. And my mom spent a couple hours with him. Nine months later here I was. This story was told to my aunt who then relayed it to me after my mother passed away.

When I was twelve years old, I was sitting at a truck stop in suburban New Jersey with my mother. I asked her what flavor ice cream she wanted, and she said, "You are the child of the famed rhythm and blues artist Screamin' Jay Hawkins." From that moment on, I knew I was marked for greatness.

[Invitation]

AMERICAN STUDIES WOMAN

The following call for papers was released in June by [illegible], a graduate student at Indiana State University in Terre Haute.

[illegible] Lived Feminisms Womanism New Mestiza Consciousness/Third Wave/Cyberfeminism The Year 2000 and Looking Forward

We invite contributions of critical, personal, and narrative essays, poetry, interviews, and other forms of written expression from women, men, and transgendered people born between 1960 and 1980 who identify themselves as feminists/Womanists/New Mestiza/Third Wave/Cyberfeminists (all, one, or some)



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nd/or who incorporate/modify/exhibit feminisms/Womanism/New Mestiza Consciousness/Third Wave/Cyberfeminism in their

"feminisms" available to Women Studies stu-

Studies, Gender Studies, Queer Studies, African

Studies, Cultural Studies, American Studies, European Studies, and Political Science professors, specialists, and grad students. We are also interested in advice, guidance, and submissions from (political/cultural) activists, "everyday people," professionals, and nonprofessionals alike. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

your brand of feminism(s), how you developed it and how you use it in your life and/or your activism
cyberfeminism(s)
race, society, culture, and (your) feminism(s)
ethnicity, society, culture, and (your) feminism(s)
sexual identities, society, culture, and (your) feminism(s)
heterosexism, homophobia, society, culture, and (your) feminism(s)
class, society, culture, and (your) feminism(s)
"disabilities," culture, and (your) feminism(s)

geography, society, culture, and (your) feminism(s)
religion and (your) feminism(s)
take back the night and (your) feminism(s)
reproductive rights and (your) feminism(s)
the body and (your) feminism(s)
the "job" and (your) feminism(s)
the "career" and (your) feminism(s)
the family and (your) feminism(s)
dating and (your) feminism(s)
love/lovers and (your) feminism(s)
fat oppression and (your) feminism(s)
skinny oppression and (your) feminism(s)
beauty/style, its delights, horrors, joys, and oppressions and (your) feminism(s)
the word "feminist" and (your) feminism(s)
list-serves or discussion lists and (your) feminism(s)
zines and (your) feminism(s)
feminist, Womanist, Third Wave, New Mestiza, mujeres de color theories, and the practice of (your) feminism(s)
"this bridge called my back" and (your) feminism(s)
"to be real" and (your) feminism(s)
"bulletproof diva" and (your) feminism(s)
"making face, making soul: haciendo caras" and (your) feminism(s)
"sister outsider" and (your) feminism(s)
"compañeras: latina lesbians" and (your) feminism(s)
Alice Walker and (your) feminism(s)
bell hooks and (your) feminism(s)
Gloria Anzaldúa and (your) feminism(s)
Audre Lorde and (your) feminism(s)
Rebecca Walker and (your) feminism(s)
French feminisms and (your) feminism(s)
any author, poet, text, film, TV program, "star," performance artist, art, music/musician, social movement, cultural production/producer/icon/iconoclast, and (your) feminism(s) (For example, Louise Erdrich, Jamaica Kincaid, Carole Maso, Gayl Jones, Mitsuye Yamada, Adrienne Rich, Chrystos, Xena, Buffy, Tori Amos, Shabana Azmi, *Fire, Girl, Interrupted, Run Lola Run, Dogma*, etc.)
grrl movements and (your) feminism(s)
the notion of a "feminist space" and (your) feminism(s)
the First Wave and (your) feminism(s)
the Second Wave and (your) feminism(s)
Women Studies programs and (your) feminism(s)
in-betweeneity and (your) feminism(s)
the notion/circumstances/consequences of "I'm not a feminist, but . . ." and (your) feminism(s)
the notion/circumstances/consequences of "I'm a feminist, but I'm not a lesbian" and (your) feminism(s)
post-structuralism, post-modernism and (your) feminism(s)

Essays should not exceed [illegible] and should follow MLA guidelines for citation and presentation. However, importance is placed on the contributors writing in their own style or in a style/manner that emphasizes the form/content of their submissions. Please include a short bio with submissions.

[Plea]

UNEAGER BEAVERS

From a letter sent last February by Bette E. [illegible] man, president of Beaver College in Glenside, Pennsylvania, to alumni, parents, staff, and students

I am writing today about a matter of great importance to the college and to me.

I have been asked to consider changing the name of the college. The word "beaver" too often elicits ridicule in the form of derogatory remarks pertaining to the rodent, the TV show *Leave It to Beaver*, and the vulgar reference to the female anatomy. The latter is of growing concern. We have found that computer access to information about the college, obtained from the increasingly popular Internet, is often screened out by sensitivity filters used by many parents, libraries, and schools. Furthermore, these filters have even blocked delivery of email messages originating from Beaver.

In addition, market research has shown conclusively that the college appeals to 30 percent fewer students solely because of its name. Also there are alumni reports that our name presents an obstacle when seeking employment and that some have chosen not to display their diplomas in order to avoid unkind remarks from colleagues. Accounts of this happening are more widespread in areas of the country where the name recognition of the college is not strong.

There has never been a time when I [illegible] had a greater need to hear from the alumni of Beaver about questions so important for the future of the college. Please complete your survey when it arrives.

[illegible]

Dr. Bette E. [illegible]

STRANGER THAN PULP FICTION

I

with this enzyme that kills any bodily fluid you can imagine. After that chemical hits it, it can be flushed down the toilet. Any remaining solid waste—the affected area of the carpet, for instance—goes to the dump and gets put into a landfill. It's totally legal. When I started using the extractor, my profits skyrocketed. It also made the whole disposal operation much safer, which is seriously important.

Because if I violate any rules, I could really get hammered. These days, there are a lot of companies that do what I do. Everything's regulated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Department of Health Services. If your operation's not tight, you're dead. The first-time fine for illegally cleaning and disposing is $20,000. But that's actually great for business, because these rules are imposed on everyone, even relatives of homicide, suicide, and accident victims. If they decide to do the cleanup themselves, they have to abide by these regulations, just like we do. And officially, these unlicensed parties are supposed to file for a "cleaning pass" before they do the job. But there's a three- to four-day turnaround to get that pass from the state. And, I mean, if you have your son's brains dripping from your ceiling, you want it taken care of yesterday. You're not gonna wanna wait for that pass. That's why it makes obvious sense to hire a company like mine. We usually arrive in a matter of hours, do the job quickly with a smile on our faces, and then we're out of there. And unless it's a really severe job, we try to keep our prices down. We rarely charge more than two grand for a job—much cheaper than the fine. It's a very good business. Very, very good.

That's not saying it's easy, though. There are definitely jobs that wear on you. We did this one recently out off the 680 freeway corridor, rural as hell. Some guy breaks into his ex-wife's house—she's away on business, works halt the year in Japan for Chevron or something. So he doesn't like her, so he gets into her bed and shoots himself in the head, and then just sits there for three months until she comes home and finds him. No joke. By the time we got there, there was a foot of crud shit in the bedroom. The rats had been eating the corpse. The guy had totally decomposed, and, I swear to God, you could see intricate details of his body and flesh imprinted on the bed, down to his hair. His spinal fluids, cerebral cranium fluids, everything had been purged from his body. And with every step you take, you're crunching, and I mean crunching like Wheaties, on dead flies, because they've been feasting and laying their eggs near the body. And we're standing there, drenched in sweat. Hazmat suits don't breathe, nor do respirators, so you're

[Employment Opportunities]

ODD JOBS

From The Dictionary of Occupational Titles *and* Occupational Outlook Handbook

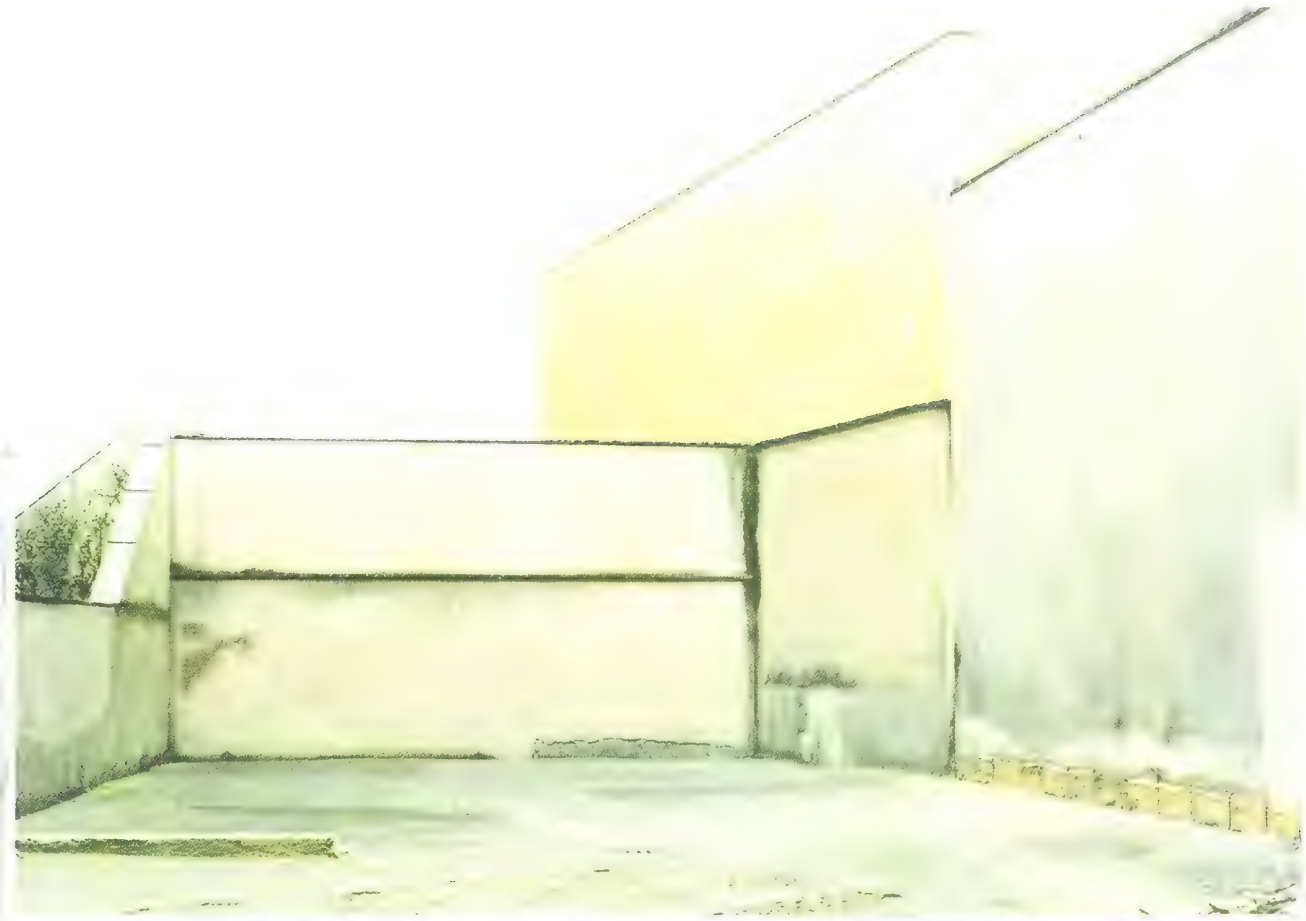
Barrel Scraper
Bed Rubber
Belly Roller
Blind Hooker
Blow-off Worker
Bolt-Head Lacer
Bone Picker
Bosom Dresser
Brain Picker
Butt Maker
Cereal Popper
Chicken Eviscerator
Cornish Diver
Cookie Breaker
Cracker
Crewel Embroiderer
Devil Feeder
Dice Spotter
Dope House Operator
Dukey Roller
Dust Sampler
Egg Smeller
Finger Waver
Fruit Fritter Coloring Operator
Hand Shaker
Head Beater
King Maker
Knocker-off
Marshmallow Runner
Mother Tester
Napper
Neck Feller
Nib Slit Operator
Nutter-up
Patchouse Grinder
Peanut Machine Operator
Pecker Operator
Pickle Pumper
Powder Nipper
Price Tucker
Puddler
Putter
Pusher
Radioactive Waste Sampler
Refrigerator Petroleum Serviceman
Rocket Packer
Santa's Helper
Scratcher
Sea-Foam-Kiss Maker
Seed Puller
Searcher
Seed Potato Analyzer
Silk Splitter
Slimer
Smoother
Smeller
Smoke Eater
Stone Caper
Streaker
Sulky Driver
Tapetter
Wall Hanger
Wall Washer
Wax Dipper and Mould Maker
Wrapper
Yarn Dyer Assistant

My truck's right outside. The only reason I'm even home right now is because I'm waiting for the movers to come. My wife can't take my [illegible] I'm out there. I'm leaving her [illegible] have enough time to spend together, and she's right. We did 700 jobs last [illegible] over 500 this year and it's only April. I don't really have time for a relationship and I don't care. I have no interest [illegible] because the company is my child, my hope.

But at the moment I'm in the time to be in this business. America is violent as shit right now and it's not coming up. The baby boomers are coming to be buying me food, the largest population in history. I think the next five to ten years are going to be our record years.

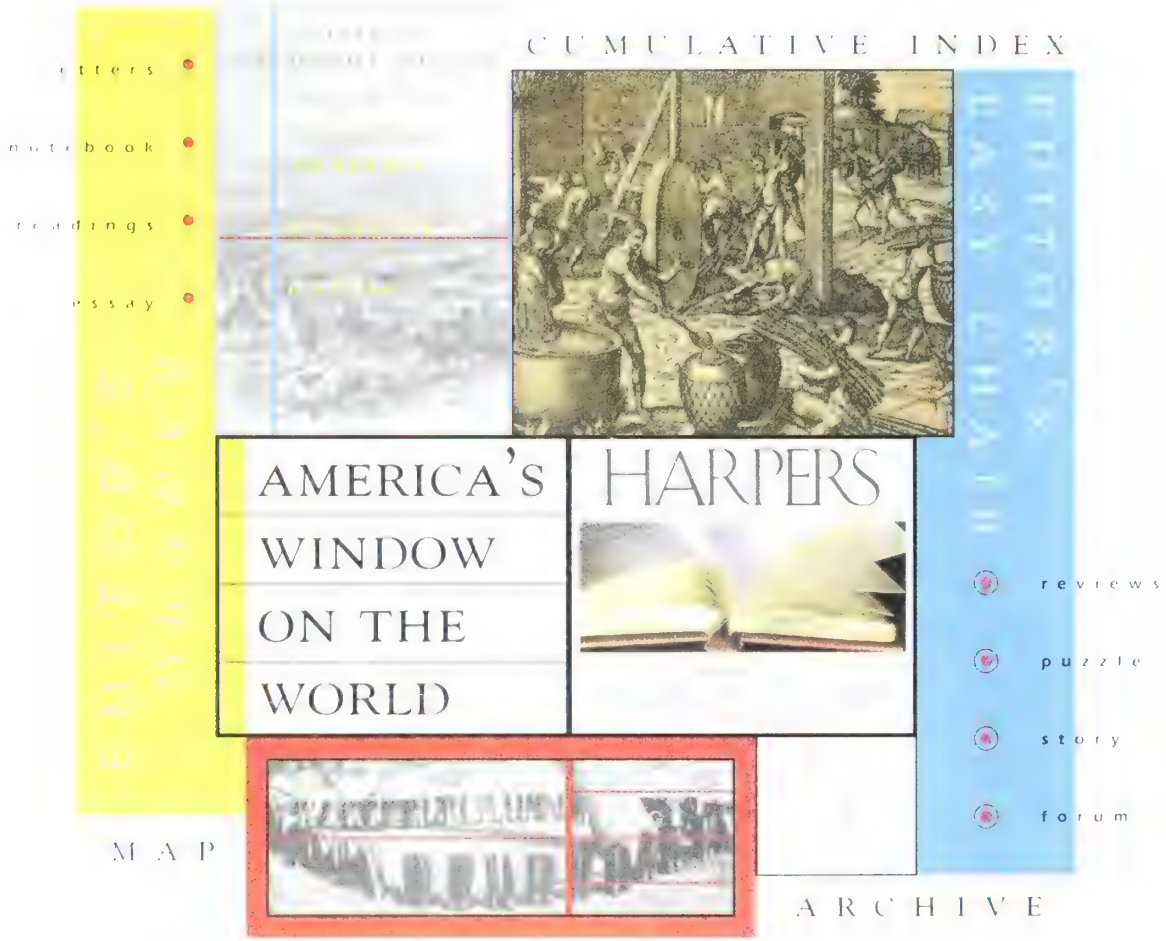
My goal is wealth, bottom line. I want to be filthy rich wealthy. I want to be bodyguard rich—so rich that I need a bodyguard wherever I go. I would like to be able to do whatever I want, at any time. If I see a helicopter to go somewhere, I want to be able to buy that fucking helicopter. That's the kind of wealth I'm talking about. And I'm come to achieve it or die trying. Of course, I'd also like the more typical things. Like a kid, you know? In a few years, I'd like some kids of my own—a couple of kids. I believe there's nothing you can't have, it's just a matter of how much you want to sacrifice, to lose, to get it.

Now I have no life, I have no marriage. I didn't devote time to it, to nourish it. But believe me, if I have kids I'm not going to just disappear on them. I will be there for my kids. They will be my priority. And just having kids will make me want to come home at night. It'll give me a reason. I may even quit the job one day. I doubt it, because I like it too much. But I might quit. More likely I'll sell, and I'll make a mint. And then I'll start another company. I've been thinking about that. I'd maybe like to do something with the hantavirus—cleaning up roads and excrement [illegible] the hantavirus? It's a communicable disease. I'd really like to develop a communicable-disease mitigation company. The challenge in that business would be the [illegible] contracting human [illegible] to that. What I mean is, let's say there's a neighborhood [illegible] rats. I want to be the company to come in and deal with it. Have you [illegible] That's what I'd like to be doing. It's definitely more dangerous. It could [illegible] me. And the money involved—that's the real deal.





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THE LAST WORD

Can the world's small languages be saved?

By Earl Shorris

Claude Lévi-Strauss had set me on the wrong path—first through his work, then in a brief correspondence, and finally during a visit to his office at the Collège de France. The anthropologist had written, in *Tristes Tropiques*, and then, in *The Savage Mind*, of broken cultures, of the inability of a culture ever to recover from a visit by an anthropologist, let alone Aristotle or the Beatles. And almost everything I saw at the end of the 1960s, when I thought I was writing in defense of American Indians, as he would have, had led to the title of my book: *The Death of the Great Spirit*.

I sent the galleys to Lévi-Strauss, who made no reply until he was inducted into the French Academy, where he spoke against this tragic view of American Indians, contending that indigenous people and languages *could* survive the incursion of European culture. His argument seemed flawed to me then, a romantic contradiction, for cultures cannot be both broken and whole.

The worm of my error was hidden by the immense suffering of the Indians. While traveling the country, visiting the vast and the tiny reservations where Indians lived, I had glimpsed resilience only once, in Anita Pfeiffer's Rough Rock Demonstration School on the Navajo Reservation. She taught the children in Diné, their own language, but I did not think it could last. And I may have been correct about the effect of one demonstration school on a nation of 100,000. In those days, most Navajo children entered school speaking Diné; a quarter of a century later, most of the children speak only English. There would seem to have been a death in the family.

The linguist Michael Krauss says that as many as 3,000 languages, comprising half of all the words on earth, are doomed to silence in the next century. According to Krauss, who, as the director of the Alaska Native Language Center, keeps count of dead and dying languages, 210 of the original 300 or more languages once spoken in the United States and Canada remain in use or in memory; 175 are spoken in the United

[illegible] Harper's Magazine [illegible]
[illegible] The Clarence Darrow in the Humanities [illegible]

Stores indicating Alaska and other all but ... perhaps fewer contin... survive much longer. Only 250 languages in the entire world have ... least a million speakers, considered the necessary safety level as globaliz... tect him and his culture, every nation, every village, no matter how remote... Only languages with state sponsorship seem likely to survive: Spanish, French, English, Indonesian. What of the more than 500 languages ... Papua New Guinea? The 400 of Nigeria? The more than 300 in India? The unknown and as yet uncounted languages in the Amazon?

The effort to preserve these and other languages is futile, as linguists and their students race to the earth to record whatever they can find ... before it's gone. But even so, it matters not at all. Noam Chomsky made it clear that the study of language itself does not require more than a few examples here and there. Two are sufficient, three a plethora, because the same structure, he says, lies deep in the brain of every Homo sapiens. Given the apparent truth of Chomsky's work, only a few of the scholars in his footsteps involve themselves in keeping languages alive. The business of their lives does not encourage it: No university offers academic credit for the survival of the object of one's dissertation. Chomsky himself gives only mild assent to such work.

Increasingly, our own language, English, dominates the world. It is the lingua franca of science, the Internet, the movies, rock and roll, television, and even sports. The word for home run in Spanish is *jonron*. Weekend in French is *week-end*. While the rest of the world complains that English is taking over its speech, just as the dollar took over the pound as currency, the forces of English Only grow stronger in the United States. On the other hand, English does not stand still, which frightens the devotees of English Only as well as those who admire diversity but cannot bear to part with a vocabulary that has fallen from general use. I count myself among the latter group. The letters *obs* in the dictionary pain me. Another word is passing; the vocabulary available to the writer is shrinking. Hard to bear. A book reviewer in the *Boston Globe* once took me to task for using too many Greek words.

English, as it is generally spoken, appears to be losing more words than it gains. You need only look at the thin thesaurus that came with your word processing program to see how the English language is losing its internal diversity. Nonetheless, ailing languages can be resuscitated; words can be brought back. The advent of another Shakespeare could vastly expand the vocabulary again. Cultures change, and languages survive by metamorphosis and the aesthetics of their creators. Who now speaks the language of Beowulf?

The death of a language is another matter. When I was a young man, premature death came easily to me, but now I am at the age when many wish forevers, and I understand, as did Lévi-Strauss so many years ago, that these languages must be saved. But how?

There are theoretical answers, of course. Yet had I not traveled to the village of Kipnuk, Evan Jolly in the Yucatán Campeche border to study Mayan glyphs or Clemente Cortés in the Humanities, such theories would have remained as elegant and remote as they once seemed. Whether what I say in the remainder of the ninth proves that languages should be kept alive, or that those we have all but lost can be brought back to life, will remain open to debate. But for me, the issue is not the realm of theory in Alaska.

A [illegible] me in a single-engine plane to the landing strip at Akiachak on the Kuskokwim River north of Bethel. I walked

...rse that will be taught to poor young people at twenty-

— Harper's Magazine, [illegible]



DORE LALE, 50, ROUSSOS CAMP, ETHIOPIA, AFRICA. LANGUAGE SPOKEN: KARO. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF SPEAKERS WORLDWIDE: 200

ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND, UNTIL QUITE RECENTLY, MOST LINGUISTS HAVE BEEN CONTENT TO EMBALM THE DEAD, PREPARING LANGUAGES FOR THE FILE CABINET



I went north, to Fairbanks, to see the man best prepared to answer such questions. Michael Krauss prowls the file cases of his office there like an Arctic bear. His passion is such that the Yupiit say of him, "Ask Michael one question and he will speak for three hours." Krauss has published an oral history of Anna Nelson Harry, one of the last speakers of Eyak. The last speaker, Marie Smith Jones, is eighty-one years old, and there is no other native speaker of Eyak on earth. What must she think of us? Neither T. S. Eliot nor Claude Lévi-Strauss knew how the world would end, but the last speaker of Eyak knows it will end in silence.

The Eyak language and others are collected in manila folders on the open shelves of the steel cases in Krauss's office. Since these folders contain the pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary of Eyak, you might say that the language has been preserved. He has made, in effect, a museum for Eyak. But this is not Alexandria; a museum is not a university now. A museum displays the peoples and works of times past, musty no matter how interactive or holographic. The American idea of manifest destiny was to consign the native peoples to museums, to make them as dead as yesterday.

Anthropologists and, until quite recently, most linguists have been content to embalm the dead, preparing languages for the file cabinet and the museum. This killing of [illegible] happens exactly as one would expect: the weak must yield to the strong in the language of the strong. Eventually, the language of the weak loses its utility, except for secrets and the making of ill-fated rebellions. The Eyak tell time by silence in the old way, caught between two larger nations on the south coast of Alaska, crushed to a whisper, until the whites came and reduced the Eyak to a single speaker. The Darwinian way of the world bears some responsibility, globalization does the rest: movies, television, Reeboks, and the Internet. The single [illegible] on the landscape of a Yup'ik village on the Alaska tundra [illegible] the cable television system. In the homes of [illegible] and the homes of all the poor of the United States, the television plays during all waking hours.

[illegible] Director Emeritus of the Alaska Native Language Center

THE DESPERATION TO EXIST THAT DRIVES THE PEOPLE OF WALES AND CATALONIA

the tundra he never used the abstract language I thought I needed to hear. I asked him if she would help me to ask the question in Yup'ik, thinking he had not understood me. "But he just answered it," she said. "Weren't you listening?"

Yup'ik immersion courses now extend through the fourth grade in southwestern Alaska. They will taper off as the children grow older, limiting the study of the language and thought to the primary schools. If the silence of the next generation begins at the entrance to complexity, the vision of those who believed in the manifest destiny of the United States and all it inherited from Europe will have been fulfilled: speakers of Yup'ik will have been reduced to the level of children.

Miguel León-Portilla, the renowned Mexican historian and translator, has said, "In order to survive, a language must have a use." He has worked for many years to keep languages alive in Mexico, which was once home to 240 different living languages. Like all Mexicans, he has had the nearby spur of the great, silenced Olmec and Teotihuacán civilizations.

In the city of Teotihuacán, which was one of the largest cities in the world in 600 A.D., speakers of various languages lived in neighborhoods of foreigners, but the language of the Teotihuacanos, perhaps 125,000 to 150,000 within the city itself and many more in the surrounding area, can no longer be heard. The pyramids and palaces stand in the sun, beautiful and magnificent, but no one speaks their language. For all the wonders of its structures, sculptures, coffers, and painted walls, Teotihuacán has no history other than in your imagination or mine.

Perhaps the death I saw from inside the preposterous garrison of youth must eventually occur, not only the *Death of the Great Spirit* in the Americas but the death of hundreds of languages in France, New Guinea, the British Isles, India—3,000 within a hundred years, soon 5,750—a catastrophe. To save languages, to provide some use, might require wars or nationalistic urges, the desperation to exist that drives the people of Wales and Catalonia. The example most often given of the rejuvenation of a language is Hebrew, which had been limited almost entirely to religious and scholarly use until it was made the state language of Israel.

In Guatemala, the K'iche' Maya struggle to stay alive in their own words. Humberto Ak'abal, killed in an automobile accident at the beginning of an international reputation, said, in one of a series of many brief poems in K'iche'

[illegible]

Here is all that can be adequately translated. The best one can do is

[illegible]

Ak'abal's poem can only be explained, and then with difficulty, because [illegible] Naual—one's other, not exactly one's alter ego, not [illegible] a spirit companion, parallel but of a different order, like and unlike [illegible] a stammering, found or encountered but never merely dreamed—has no English or Spanish equivalent. It cannot be appropriated [illegible] the more powerful, not even by military dictators or death squads. [illegible] committed poems but silence.

To save the sound of the Nawal, the K'iche' are willing to die and many have been shot, dismembered, burned, buried, or thrown into volcanoes in Guatemala. Perhaps the war itself worked on the Maya in a Nietzschean way, strengthening those it did not destroy. But the history of wars between cultures would argue that the K'iche' Maya were in alteration, the odds favored the Spanish speakers in their helicopters.

For all that I admire the fortitude of the Guatemalans, their situation did not prove the error of what I had written in that long-ago book. Silence had not yet fallen in Guatemala or in Chiapas, these were among the living languages, those that *could be* lost. The demonstration of my mistake began one afternoon in a tiny village in the low jungle of the Yucatán, where I went to do research for a book and found myself starting a Clemente Course in Maya.

The situation requires a few words of history. The decline had gone on for many centuries. The Maya city-states had ravaged one another in terrible wars of betrayal and fire. Then the Spaniards invaded, burning the painted books, destroying culture for the sake of culture. The Maya resisted the Spaniards, attempted to secede from Mexico, prayed to Yum Chac when the Christian God and His saints failed to bring rain, but they could not stand up before the economic power of the henequen planters. Henequen, the agave fiber used to make rope and sisal matting, had finally been the worst enemy in that part of the peninsula.

The Maya descended into the depths of colonialism. The planters owned everything, they brought overseers to the peninsula to work the Maya like beasts in the fields all day and lock them into cells at night, they devoted themselves to silencing the language as a defense against rebels and other heretics, and all the while the henequen fields displaced the corn and beans and squash of the Maya farmers and the forage, food and medicinal plants of the low jungle. Then the market for Mexican sisal collapsed in the mid-twentieth century and with it the economy of the henequen area. The people lived on government welfare until in the late 1980s President Carlos Salinas de Gortari ended the welfare, and nothing remained.



MABAI, 25, HUAY PU KANG, THAILAND. LANGUAGE SPOKEN: KAREN, PADAUNG DIALECT. ESTIMATED NUMBER OF SPEAKERS WORLDWIDE: 41,000

The professors and I traveled about two hours from Mérida to the village in a van driven by Raul Murguía Rosete, who directs more than fifty programs for the United Nations Development Programme in the Yucatán. The faculty was to meet the students for the first time that afternoon. I had prepared the students, working in the comfort of Murguía's genius for organization and the trust he had earned from the villagers. The students and I had discussed the Socratic method, which would be used in the course, though the entire project had come near to crashing on laughter after I told them I would be their *partera*, or midwife. Murguía had leapt in to explain that I meant *that* midwife. But even he could not help but laugh, so far was Socrates from the Yucatán and so inept was my explanation.

After the long trip in the air-conditioned van, the heat and humidity of the village staggered us. We went quickly into the shade of the sm-

Maya may be translated as [illegible] Hispanic Maya creations appear to have [illegible] laugh many people since [illegible] is both phonetic—in the sense that symbols represent [illegible] symbols representing entire words. The technical term is logosyllabic.

T



A

more than eighty-five cents a day, the students speak of the literature of their ancestors. They know the poetry and stories and those works the ancient Maya called histories of the future. May May taught them the difficult and subtle sounds of their language again, using the ring of coins on stone and the clack of bricks and the conk of wood. He gave them writing as well as reading, and the other teachers built the culture again in the minds of the students, starting from the corn, as everything among the Maya starts with corn, the one grain that cannot live without the help of man.

At first, the eroticism of the Kay Nicte, the Flower Song, embarrassed them. Naked beside a stone pool set them to giggling, but then the gorgeous language of the old Maya poem reached them, and they understood that language also carries meaning in the sound, and at last they knew that they are descendants of singers and also sing.

The students read the *Popol Vuh*, a work with deep pre-Hispanic roots sometimes known as the Maya Bible, and spoke of the suffering that lies behind the making of art. They understood the homologous lives of heroes and corn. They learned the fate of the ancient men of wood, those early technologists who were destroyed when the things they had made to serve them rose up and tore them apart.

Soon, other villages heard of this antidote to silence and asked to be part of it. One evening, I met with a group of old men in a town north of Mérida. They asked for help in putting off the silence, but not with children's words, kitchen Maya, the overseer's vocabulary of force. That was another silence. The old men knew; they remembered. They wished to be philosophers, mathematicians, poets, artists. One old man sang songs he had composed, but they were in Spanish. The others screwed up their faces.

What could they hope for now? Why did the old men want to know? Linguists divide the world of languages into four classes in descending order: those spoken by children, those spoken by people of childbearing age, those spoken only by people beyond childbearing age, and those spoken or remembered only by a few old people. Many of the languages of the world are in the last three categories, apparently moribund.

Then why did the old men, moribund themselves—hobbling, toothless, aged leather valises full of bones—want the words? "Will you come back next week?" they had asked.

"I cannot."

"Then who will tell us our stories?"

"Perhaps . . . ," I had said, offering a common Spanish antidote to despair.

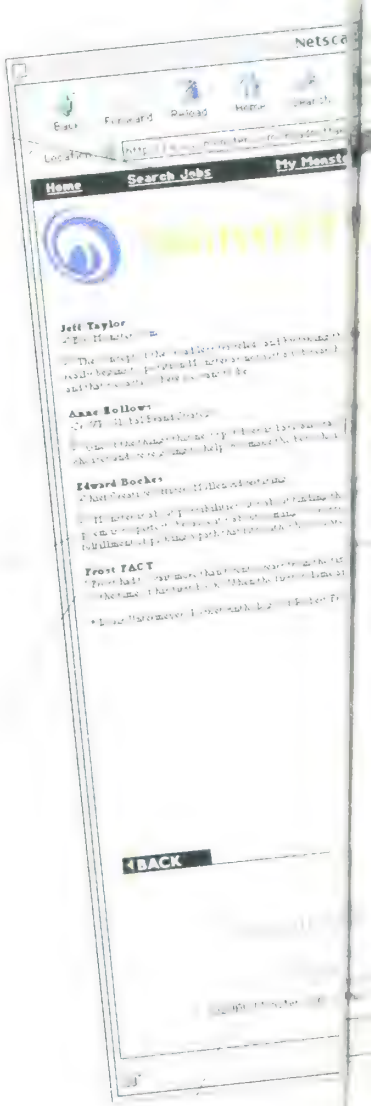
I think now that every language has its *Ekkan Yuc*. The consolation the old men sought existed only in Maya. Every epithet implied a unique set of attributes, every sound described a unique Being. It is not merely a writer's conceit to think that the human world is made of words and to remember that no two words in all the world's languages are alike. Of all the arts and sciences made by man, none equals a language, for only a language in its living entirety can describe a unique and irreplaceable world. I saw this once, in the forest of southern Mexico, when a butterfly settled beside me. The color of it was a blue unlike any I had ever seen, hue and intensity beyond naming, a test for the possibilities of metaphor. In the distance lay the famed Maya city of Palenque, where the glyphs that speak of the reign of the great lord Pacal are carved in stone. The glyphs can be deciphered now, perhaps. Only perhaps, for no one knows what words were spoken, what words were made when Pacal the Conqueror reigned. It may seem cryptic, even Socratic to say, but, in truth, only spoken words can be heard.

There are nine different words in Maya for the color blue in the comprehensive Porrúa Spanish-Maya Dictionary but just three Spanish translations, leaving six butterflies that can be seen only by the Maya, proving beyond doubt that when a language dies six butterflies disappear from the consciousness of the earth. ■

OF ALL THE ARTS OF MAN, NONE EQUALS A LANGUAGE, FOR ONLY A LANGUAGE IN ITS LIVING ENTIRETY CAN DESCRIBE AN IRREPLACEABLE WORLD

THE DEATH OF

Robert Frost, Monster.com, and the



In his quest for work as a Content Producer, [illegible] found online at Monster.com. A job search [illegible] "poet" yielded the following results: fifteen job [illegible] and management software (that's "business to business") "or not to be?"— [illegible] Content Producer ("make [illegible] poet, a pioneer, a poet"). Applicants for the [illegible] perspective.

E HIRED POEM

affluence, *by John Jeremiah Sullivan*



[illegible] Harper's Magazine

Meet Trump, Monster.com's mascot. Why a cartoon to represent a site designed for disgruntled workers? The promise of perpetual childhood is one of the New Economy's most marketable commodities. Last year's Monster.com Super Bowl ad, "When I Grow Up," showed a series of kids gazing wearily into the camera, intoning such lines as, "When I grow up . . . I want to claw my way up to middle management." Or, *I want to punch out on you sorry bastard*. The ad ended with a question: "What did you want to be?" The message: Go back and be an astronaut. In the "Road Not Taken" ad, there is a little schoolgirl who recites the poem's last line and floats up into the air (anything is possible). Here's Frost, in "Birches," a poem about that feeling you get when "life is too much like a pathless wood" and you'd "like to get away from earth awhile" by returning to childhood: "Earth's the right place for love: I don't know where it's likely to go better."

On the Internet, every [illegible] here [illegible], and vice versa. Choice is all. And so it goes, supposedly, with the job market that the Internet made possible. As an add for Jobs.com says, "Who wants a job where the most you can be is competent. I want to be cool!" And why be content with a mid-level job, when out there in Silicon Valley they're taking trapeze lessons on little economic perks by their desks? It's true that you're more likely, in the New Economy, to run a cash register than you are a company, more likely to be murdered on the job, like for bad tips, and make one five-hundredth what your boss makes than you were ten years ago. But the point, suggests Monster.com, is that bad jobs are for suckers. So if, like a growing number of Americans (25 million at last count), you're stuck in a low-end service job (or two) that pays around $300 a week, it follows that the fault lies not with capital, not with labor policies, not fate, but with you. You must have taken the well-traveled road. [illegible]

"The Road Not Taken" is shown here in full, but for the TV spot, Monster.com excised eleven of the poem's twenty lines. Out went the second stanza, in which the qualifying note is introduced: "the passing there/Had worn them really about the same." Out went the wistful resignation to the place for that in the New Economy) of "I doubted if I should ever come back." Out, most brazenly, went the first two lines of the last stanza, in which the speaker imagines himself in old age, turning the wavering and randomness of his life into a tale of courage and foresight. Scraped clean of irony, the abridged text that Monster.com's "career characters" recites is in the complacent poem to heroic individualism, just the sort of thing the speaker's own sighing self might come up with, in one of his less honest moments. We can only wonder whether Frost, [illegible] turning in his grave at the thought of [illegible] quoting [illegible] selectively [illegible] rather grim little monologue.

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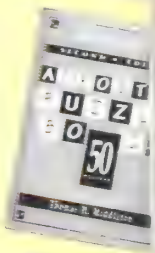




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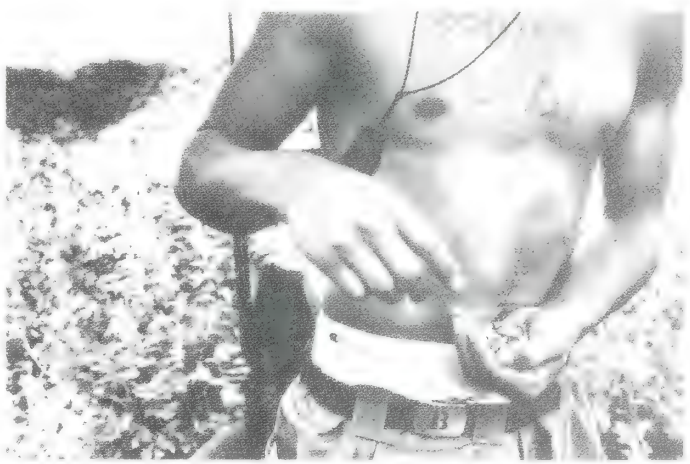
YOU MUST GO HOME AGAIN

Deported L.A. gangbangers take over El Salvador

By Scott Wallace

One day in late September 1983, I stood in the blinding white light of midmorning on the ravaged town square of Tenancingo in central El Salvador, gagging on the stench of rotting corpses. Three nights earlier, hundreds of rebels from the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, who were fighting the U.S.-supported government for a share of their country's political power, swept down from the nearby Guazapa volcano to overwhelm the army garrison in Tenancingo. Barricaded inside the colonial church on the square, the army's desperate commander ordered an air strike on the town in a futile attempt to stave off the rebels. As the FMLN guerrillas captured the captain and seventy other soldiers and fled into the mountains, U.S.-supplied aircraft laid waste to entire blocks of the town, killing scores of villagers and leaving survivors staggering through the wreckage with dazed, vacant stares.

After the army retook Tenancingo, soldiers in surgical masks picked their way through dust and rubble, raided in their search for bodies by emaciated mongrels scrounging for a meal. The warplanes had vanished, leaving the pale-blue sky to squadrons of circling vultures. Despite the humiliation government forces had suffered, an army colonel convoked the townsfolk with a victorious flourish after troops unearthed a bloated rebel carcass from a heap of rubble. Holding aloft a shattered M-16 stripped from the dead guerrilla, the colonel cried: "This is proof the terrorists are getting their weapons from Nicaragua!" His claim was lifted straight out of the script written by the Reagan Administration to justify U.S. intervention in El Salvador and Nicaragua. As I jotted down the colonel's comments, I wondered if he—and American officials, for that matter—really believed in the lines they were parroting. After all, the United States was funneling the only lethal military weapons of the entire FMLN, which the rebels were seizing in routine skirmishes and coordinated assaults on government garrisons and armories. In the attack on Tenancingo alone, the rebels were [illegible] ninety-seven rifles.



Standing amid debris-littered Dallmus, I darkly [illegible] family portraits framed in shards of broken glass, the villagers listened to the colonel's words in stony silence. But his speech was really for a distant, far more influential audience, whom he would [illegible] through the international correspondents there to cover the pitched battle with our reporters, interviewers and [illegible]. We [illegible] that the United States was the single largest supplier [illegible] to both sides in the Salvadoran civil war. But few reporters [illegible] the [illegible] the ethical line [illegible] have been called into question. So the colonel's statements—and a [illegible] from Washington—went [illegible] challenged, and the Administration [illegible] its case [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] intervention.

Six [illegible] attack on Tenancingo and seven

Scott Wallace [illegible] the horrors of Central America [illegible] in the 1980s [illegible] reported for [illegible] Nation, Rolling Stone, [illegible] the London Independent, [illegible] Guardian. He [illegible] a producer for CNN in Nicaragua. Shots: CNN & Time.



in search of an elusive enemy. "It's difficult to track them down," says police agent Jose Roberto Ramirez, as he wipes his sweat-drenched face with a sleeve. "They know the terrain, and they know how to operate. They all have *armas de guerra* and military knowledge. These are people who participated directly in the war."

Lasting a dozen years, the Salvadoran civil war left some 75,000 dead—most killed by right-wing death squads or their allies in the military and police—and forced more than 20 percent of El Salvador's 5 million people to flee the country or seek shelter in USAID-funded resettlement centers. For all its Cold War trappings, the Salvadoran conflict was essentially a textbook case of class warfare—pitting the interests of the U.S.-supported business elite against those of the poor. Armed opposition grew out of a broad-based struggle for social reform that was greeted with bullets and a succession of stolen elections throughout the better part of the twentieth century. By 1980, the year the combat boiled over into full-scale civil war, government troops were slaughtering street demonstrators by the hundreds; anyone who opposed the regime became a potential target for abduction and assassination. The Sandinistas had just toppled the Somoza family dynasty (a longtime U.S. ally) in nearby Nicaragua, and American hawks saw El Salvador as the next "domino" poised to fall to Marxist revolutionaries. When Ronald Reagan assumed office in January 1981, he immediately proclaimed he was "drawing the line" in El Salvador against "Communist expansion" in the hemisphere.

By the mid-1980s, El Salvador had become the third-largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid, after Egypt and Israel, with economic and alone topping $430 million in 1985. Armed and advised by the Pentagon, the Salvadoran army racked up a growing list of battlefield atrocities, but no massacre or abuse of human rights proved sufficient to derail America's commitment to bring "democracy" to El Salvador. Aided in turn by Cuba and Nicaragua, the rebels proved resilient, regrouping each escalation with new forces of their own. As the civilian body count mounted, combatants on both sides became increasingly adept in the dark arts of espionage, abduction, extortion, and murder.

Then the Soviet Union fell, and with support from their respective Cold War allies drying up, the antagonists signed peace accords in 1992. In exchange for laying down their arms, the guerrillas managed to wring some concessions from the government: commanders suspected of links with the death squads were dismissed, the army's ranks were dramatically scaled back, and the FMLN emerged as a political party that is a true rival to the conservative National Republican Alliance, a crucial development for a country in which the democratic aspirations of the populace had been thwarted for decades. But those responsible for

EVENTS SET IN MOTION BY [illegible] CIVIL WAR HAVE [illegible] COUPS AND MILITARY ATTACKS [illegible] A NEW FORM OF [illegible]

atrocities on both sides were never brought to trial, and the big questions—like how to overhaul El Salvador's highly skewed distribution of wealth—were left largely unresolved. Now the violence has taken on a distinctly commercial character, and the range of potential victims has expanded to include just about anyone. "It's like it was at the beginning of the war," Officer Ramirez said, as he pointed to a pink-shuttered [illegible] house recently vacated by a [illegible] at the base of Guazapa. "They're pulling people from their beds at night. Only now it's a business."

The war may have ended [illegible] years ago, but permutations of it continue to surface every day in the "New El Salvador," the preferred term among government officials eager to attract new investors and tourists. El Salvador remains the most violent country in the hemisphere, with a murder rate [illegible] per

[illegible] arrived in El Salvador fresh out of [illegible] Bosnia, I found myself drawn toward the [illegible] Mafia stories in the former Soviet Union, land theft in the Amazon, [illegible] And somewhere [illegible] I encountered [illegible] experience [illegible] its variable responses from law [illegible] we looked at death and contemplated its authorship, often [illegible] or multiple killings, before the authorities did, if they came at all. We [illegible] cover up rather than reveal. So I [illegible] reporter returning to the [illegible] seemingly more intractable turmoil [illegible]

At first glance, El Salvador [illegible] war mayhem seems similar to that of other countries emerging from [illegible] of conflict, such as South [illegible] integration, the dismantling [illegible]

ome with specialized

Undocumented Salvadorans

Yard. Honest. But even during the war, Linares cultivated a reputation as a no-nonsense strategist, granting press interviews at the front, pushing for more aid and not merely repeating the tired lexicon laid down by the supreme comandantes. True to his old self, Linares now acknowledges that neither his 9,000-man municipal police force nor the 20,000-man national police can address what he calls the "deeper causes" fueling El Salvador's crime rate. "At the bottom of the problem," the mild-mannered ex-rebel said, "are the problems that gave rise to the conflict in the first place—poverty, inequality, and the repressive conditions of gross social [illegible]."

Our police forces used the same map to plot out all the suspected rebel safe houses and infiltration routes. Now the multicolored grease pencil marks on Linares's map indicate zones of prostitution, drug trafficking, and black market activity.

"I apply the theory of the broken window," Linares said, referring to the doctrine of former New York City police commissioner William Bratton in the early 1990s, which urged building code violations and other petty offenses as a strategy to preempt more serious crime. "We close down the brothels, round up the dope dealers. It helps prevent delinquency."

It was curious to hear Linares, who spent twenty-one of his forty-eight years as a guerrilla in the FMLN—including nine as an urban commander in San Salvador's underground—extol the virtues of New

WHEN FORMER SALVADORAN STEADY [illegible] AND THEN BEGAN [illegible] VETERANS OF OUR OWN CIA- AND FEDERAL PAYS

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organized crime enjoys almost total impunity," he lamented, while street gangs offer the criminal syndicates, largely composed of former death squad members, a vast market for illegal narcotics and weapons as well as a recruiting base for mid-level pushers and chief triggermen.

The old lines of conflict have blurred almost beyond recognition, but their vestiges can be vaguely discerned in the criminal elements each of the warring parties has spawned in *la post-guerra*. Urban slums where the rebels once held sway are now home to a tribal culture of violent gangs, while former army officers have vanished into shadowy quasi-legitimate enterprises in which the old military chain of command is faithfully replicated is the corporate hierarchy. One private security agency alone employs 6,000 land of soldiers and cops—including specialists in electronic surveillance, abduction, interrogation, and summary execution. And in places like Guazapa, ex-combatants from both sides have banded together to form a hybrid collection of social misfits ready to prey on any target, large or small.

The one bright spot in an otherwise dismal picture, Linares allowed, was the peace accords' provision that created the new civilian police authority—the Policía Nacional Civil—its ranks filled with former guerrillas like himself, many of whom are now trying to build a professional, competent force without the ideological baggage that made El Salvador's old security forces the backbone of political repression.[3] Unfortunately, PNC officers are poorly trained, underfunded, and lacking in the most rudimentary investigative know-how. "They solve one case out of every thousand," he said as he shrugged. And it's unclear whether the PNC has the will to pursue El Salvador's organized crime groups. While former guerrillas now account for 20 percent

[3] Most of the FMLN's rank-and-file [illegible] remain [illegible] 85 percent of the police [illegible]. Such [illegible] to turn a blind eye [illegible] and [illegible] any [illegible] civil [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

the PNC's officer corps the defec-
ve diversion is riddled with discretio-
ements, thus ensuring both an enc-
uraging cover-up of atrocities and t
hole new genre of collaboration be-
ween state intelligence and the crim-
nal underworld. And made-quate
reening of recruits allowed
gents—if not hundreds of delin-
uents to penetrate the new force,
ndermining efforts to win the pub-
c's trust. "Criminality springs from
he very same police
orce," Linares said.
They take off their
niforms and stage as-
ults with the same
eapons they're issued
to enforce
the law."



During the war,
oreign reporters would
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he letters "PX" taped
our windshields, and
ead off to the front in
ach of the "Boys" or
he "G's"—code words
e favored, since the
ord "guerrillas" could
e too easily recog-
ized by eavesdroppers lurking in
an Salvador's restaurants and hotel
obbies. As far as the army was con-
rned, journalists talking to rebels
ere often considered collaborators
nd subject to ambush. On the other
nd, the highly disciplined, media-
vvy rebels were almost always non-
hreatening. If you were really lucky,
ou'd run across a straight talker like
inares in the plaza of some aban-
oned town, where red revolutionary
affiti exhorted government soldiers
o desert the "army of the rich." It
as getting there—and getting
ut—that presented the greatest
hallenge.

But a whole new dynamic exists in
he New El Salvador, and I wasn't
ure what to expect as I rode out to
he colonial city of Quetzaltepeque,
st west of Guazapa, to look for the
aras. Once a frequent dumping
ound for the death squads, the city
mains one of El Salvador's most
ngerous, the scene of ongoing turf
rfles between local *chekas*—or
ques, of Mara Salvatrucha and
called Sangre de Cristo—the spot of
I.V.—Mac Arthur Park—or the
1950s. The wall above Calle Cuarta,
the city's main drag, are smothered
in graffiti, which include
several memorials to fallen homies. I
directed my driver to follow the gut-
ted back streets along the city's west-
ern edge, 18th Street territory. Lur-
king leaden greeted us with ex-
stares at every corner, and it looked
too dicey to attempt conversation

So we headed instead to the La
Palmas neighborhood, a stretch of
the Mara Salvatrucha on the south
side of town, where the paved streets
turned to dirt and single-story homes
dotted coffee groves. There we
came upon a slim man with a goatee
in his mid-twenties dressed in a
sleeveless white T-shirt. He had a
slicked back to a ducktail. To my sur-
prise, he introduced himself in perfect
L.A. Spanglish. "Hey, man, it's Giovanni Castro," he said, extending a
hand attached to a sinewy, tattooed
arm. "But you can call me White.
That's what the homies call me here."

White left the country at the age of
twelve, he said, after death squads
dragged his mother from a local
movie theater and murdered her.
"They cut her hands and arms off,"
he said. White eventually found his
way to Los Angeles, traveling all the
way by freight train through Tapachula,
Mexico, and on to the border town
of Nogales. Once in L.A., White
hooked up with a Hollywood gang called White Fence and made



S

Alliance, plans to create multiple educational, recreational, and employment opportunities for teens have largely evaporated. Youngsters have been left to fend for themselves in a new world without signposts, where local traditions are rapidly succumbing to an entire zeitgeist of imported food, music, and fashion.

More and more, Salvadorans are finding their daily nourishment at gleaming new convenience stores that appear to have been uprooted from Anywhere, U.S.A., and magically plunked down amid the wild elephant grass of El Salvador's tropical squalor. The shops come replete with piped-in hip-hop, Bunn-o-matic serve-yourself coffee, and Subway sandwich counters (with step-by-step hints to help bewildered first-timers select their combination of meat, cheese, bread, and garnishes). The bustling Esso Tiger-marts do offer features that distinguish them from their North American cousins: prominent displays of vodka, *aguardiente*, and rum, and shotgun-toting security guards, who are often called upon to engage bandits and gangs in pitched parking-lot battles.

The guerrillas' goal of recarving El Salvador's pie to include a greater cut for the masses now seems like a distant, naive dream. The old landed oligarchy has mutated into a new cabal of wealthy bankers and industrialists, with the usual suspects jumping on the country's highly profitable postwar wave of privatization. Meanwhile, 50 percent of the country's workforce is underemployed, and nearly 25 percent of the population live in "absolute" poverty. Young Salvadorans who find themselves on the outside looking in have been primed by MTV culture to embrace that other big U.S. export: street gangs. "The majority of those deported were *mara* who had been hardened in American jails," Rocko said. "Those who came from the States brought with them their organization—and the same dress and manner of speaking that kids here had seen in the movies. They attracted the attention of kids who were hanging out, looking for someone they could look up to."

As the Mara Salvatrucha and the Calle 18 came to El Salvador, they quickly grew into national organizations, with "branch offices" across the country. Since many of the deportees returned to the same remote war zones their parents had fled in the 1980s, they spread U.S. urban gang culture deep into rural communities, creating satellite cells dependent on the larger city-based outfits for drugs, weapons, and directives. Like a series of corporate mergers, the old homegrown neighborhood gangs—with names like The Roosters, Mao Mao, and Baby Gang—were forced into *clicks* affiliated with either the MS or the 18th Street. Today, nearly every city and town in El Salvador is carved up into an intricate patchwork of rival cliques, nearly all pertaining to, or otherwise dependent on, the two archrivals from L.A.

EL SALVADOR'S RESPECTED DEATH SQUADS MAY BE TARGETING BOTH PROGRESSIVE PRIESTS AND ACTIVISTS WORRY THAT THEY MAY BE NEXT

"What has us really worried now is the flood of drugs flowing into the country," said Rocko. "Since 1995, the country's been awash in crack." That year, according to police sources, the Colombian cartels began to insist on paying "in trade" rather than with cash for rights to refuel their northbound aircraft on the dirt strips that service large plantations strung out along Central America's highlands and coastal plains. To convert the drugs to cash, hacienda owners, corrupt customs agents, and others linked to the Colombian trade were obliged to increase sharply local demand for cocaine. "*El crack* has accelerated the violence among the *maras* tremendously," said Rocko. "But on the national level, no one seems to care. Drug trafficking is not on the agenda."

Along with scattered private efforts like Rocko's, progressive elements within the Catholic Church have been spearheading efforts to channel the gangs' raw energy into more positive direction. To diffuse tension, clergy and lay workers have brought leaders from rival cliques together, offering workshops in car mechanics, furniture making, and word processing.

One night in San Salvador's working-class district of Ilopango, parish lay workers arranged for me to meet with an articulate gang leader named Murra. At twenty-two, Murra was already a nine-year veteran of the hundred-strong Trident clique—an 18th Street ally that controls a square mile of urban turf surrounded by hostile chapters of the Mara Salvatrucha. Murra sported none of the wild graffiti usually tattooed across the foreheads, chins, and forearms of Salvadoran gangbangers. Such tattoos serve to bind gang members together and distinguish them from rivals, creating a kind of artificial tribalism in the absence of the ethnic differences that have fueled conflicts in places like the Balkans or Central Africa. Evidently, Murra had staked out a more thoughtful position than most of his peers on the use of tattoos.

"It's an immediate giveaway to *los perros* [the dogs]," he said, referring to the police. Murra pointed to his single tattoo: a small, three-dotted triangular formation etched just above the knuckle on one finger. "It's the Trident—drugs, sex, and rock and roll," he clarified. "Only now it's hip-hop. You know, *la vida loca*."

We sat on a bench in the pale glow of a barren light bulb under the tin-roof eaves of the parish house. The sky thundered and a torrential rain broke loose, soaking our boots while puddles the size of small lakes spread across the dirt courtyard. Murra's darting eyes kept a close watch on the street from beneath the visor of a Philadelphia Eagles cap. "We're in enemy territory here," he explained. The last time Murra came to the church, about a month earlier, his presence was detected by MS lookouts. They closed in on the quadrant of single-story cement block houses and the [illegible] church grounds. Murra scrambled to the parish office and [illegible] comrades, who armed [illegible]

to keep a low profile. With the gang's connection to narcotics-related violence, Hugo was able to secure the minimum wage job on the assembly line of a foreign-run maquiladora. But Murra knew he had traveled too far down a certain road to be able to retrace his steps, like the Mara and the CIA, gang life is forever. "If someone wants to leave and he knows too much about the gang, we kill him." Murra shrugged, implicitly acknowledging his own predicament. "When he leaves he'll start to talk. We can't let him out alive."

When the time came to evacuate Murra from the barrio, a lay worker in his early twenties named Noé went out into the rain to look for a taxi. The cab's windshield wipers slapped back and forth as we drove through the damp, deserted streets, past high cement walls topped with razor wire and shards of broken glass. Someone had painted an enormous English slogan—WEL- —which ran along one wall for nearly an entire block. "It's only because of guys like Murra that we can walk the streets here," said Noé smiling and giving Murra an affectionate pat on the knee. "They provide protection for us." We left Murra under a street lamp at a corner where a dirt road lined by walls, barbed wire and razor-topped shadows thrown by swaying palms and locust trees. Before he got out of the car, Murra asked if I had a chance to learn a Spanish [illegible] expression. *Huevos. Huevos* [illegible] "Balls," I answered. He laughed and said when I got back to the states he would be my [illegible] "Good," he added, turning away from the door. He turned and vanished into the night.

[illegible] "See what people have created now." He [illegible] "Now they're killing each other for a piece of land, a piece of ground, a piece of dirt. Why? Why? Why?"

security companies. They know where they're going to find their [illegible] The same people—"high-ranking officers," Noé called them—had also taken a dim view of Murra's work evangelizing among the gangs. Anonymous death threats had been mailed to the parish, and on a recent night Noé was intercepted on a dark street by a surly man with a baseball cap pulled low over his eyes. "You dogs better watch out," the man snarled. "We know who you are. We're keeping tabs on you." Such encounters had convinced Noé that elements of the old guard were operating to keep El Salvador's youth steeped in gang violence. "They don't want the gangs to disappear," Noé said. "It's a distraction, a big screen to hide the huge theft they're committing from the eyes of the people."

It stands to reason that reactionary forces might see the perpetuation of gang warfare as a useful mechanism for blunting whatever danger of revolution might remain. In a single generation, El Salvador's urban youth, who formed the backbone of one of the most powerful revolutionary movements in the history of Latin America, have lowered their sights from molding a socialist utopia to enforcing gang rule within the circumscribed perimeters of their respective barrios. The far right, in contrast, has remained largely intact, using both legal and extralegal means to pound fresh nails into the coffin of reform.

Although it was only nine o'clock, Noé deemed my own exit from Ilopango too risky. After sunset *bandas* of former rebels and soldiers emerge to kidnap and loot along the lonely two-lane highway that separates the barrio from the center of San Salvador; it was best to stay put until morning. Through the course of a sweaty, sleepless night, I lay in bed with my ears straining at every creaking branch

and passing footstep, cursing myself for letting those El Direct[illegible] were right, where I would [illegible] In the new El Salvador, you never know who might be willing to trade such information for a few extra pesos.

Perhaps no single person better embodies El Salvador's long slide into twilight than a seventeen-year-old gang leader and hired assassin named Gustavo Adolfo, better known by his suggestive gang name, El Directo—"The Direct One." Since his arrest in January 1999, El Directo has emerged as a dark celebrity, the subject of lurid hip-hop verse and sensational tabloid headlines. According to court officials, El Directo was the prime orchestrator of a two-year wave of terror that swept across the overgrown lots and graffiti-smothered blocks of the eastern city of San Miguel. He is said to have hacked apart street urchins with machetes and pickaxes, disposing of their bodies in a command well. And he allegedly lured a series of schoolgirls behind a gleaming new Miami-style shopping mall, where he led his Mara Salvatrucha comrades in ceremonial gang rapes that ended with the execution of the victims.

El Directo's penchant for murder put him out on that murky, ill-defined frontier of Salvadoran crime where gang violence intersects with the more calculated business of terror for profit and *pandilleros* graduate from street toughs to foot soldiers for organized crime. El Directo was getting money from somewhere; neighborhood kids said he never lacked for drugs or weapons. And police say that on a number of occasions, Gustavo served as a *sicario*—a hired gun—for an undisclosed clientele. Authorities suspect El Directo of at least seventeen grisly murders—one for each year of his short life.

While covering the war back in the 1980s, I met plenty of reputed killers who insisted on the wholesale ideological cleansing then under way in El Salvador, even if they disavowed any direct participation in it. But when my eyes met the flat lifeless ones of Gustavo Adolfo, I sensed I was in the presence of a new sort of animal for whom killing was a matter of simple expedience, with no more need for explanation than the imperative of eating breakfast in the morning.

"I don't mess with anyone who doesn't mess with me," El Directo said in a bored monotone barely audible over the raucous banter of older juvenile offenders wrestling outside in the prison courtyard. "Because, quite simply, those that did . . . I made them disappear."

Gustavo came to gang life the way many kids do in El Salvador. Raised by a stepfather who sexually abused him and a suspicious mother who kept him in social exile from the rest of the household, Gustavo finally found a family when he joined the local clique of the Mara Salvatrucha at the age of eleven. He became an eager student of weapons of every sort—from assault rifles to homemade bombs—and displayed a startling disposition to put them to use, rising higher in the ranks with each successive rubout. "The weapon I used depended on where I happened to be," he said matter-of-factly, when I asked about his firearm of choice. "We [stole] guns in different parts of the neighborhood." Gustavo displayed an encyclopedic knowledge of the various infantry weapons left behind from the war and the price each could fetch on the black market. "We'll have our guns from a police agent," he said, declining to be more specific. "He would take the guns at the [illegible] in San Miguel and sell them to us."

I was grateful to be meeting El Directo in circumstances that stripped him of the kind of power he exercised over his gang in the streets of San Miguel. I studied the bewildering array of spiderwebs, clown faces, and gang symbols tattooed on his face, neck, and arms. A cellmate had just added a fresh addition to El Directo's body art, etching an M and an S in large Gothic letters on the back of each hand. The raw and pussy grooves hurt just to look at, and I redirected my gaze toward a distant point on the puke-green prison wall.

Attempting to explain Gustavo's ferocious behavior, a court psychologist told me this story. When [illegible] mother went to the hospital to

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[illegible] Bhattsen Essay Award

[illegible] ton Rog[illegible]

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[illegible] seventeen [illegible] in an ambu[illegible] filled with the distinguished [illegible] suicidal soldier who had [illegible] to put on a grenade inside a crowded saloon. Curiously, [illegible] arrested El Pueblo at [illegible] last year, he lunged for a similar fragmentation grenade he kept in a shelf in his room, perhaps intending to depart this world the same way he had entered it. "This is the front of recent history who grew up with the war," the psychologist said.

That war is in the past, and the United States has taken a considerably lower profile than back in the 1980s, when we were pumping $1 million a day into El Salvador, when every utterance of our ambassador was quoted prominently in the local press and the State Department drew up plans to move the Eighth Fleet's flagship embassy to a vastly expanded new facility on San Salvador's western outskirts. The U.S. mission occupied the sprawling new complex in 1992, just as the war was ending. Built to wartime specifications and intended to house a legion of bureaucrats, spooks, and military officers, much of the complex would now sit empty were it not for [illegible]'s decision to warehouse many of its regional functionaries in the new *embajada*.

I passed through a series of security checkpoints and looked in bewilderment at the silent, climate-controlled sterility of the embassy. On the fifth floor I met with Marcie Ostrom, a beefy State Department spokeswoman, who gushed over San Salvador's prodi[illegible] and the [illegible] under way in postwar El Salvador. To [illegible] Army Reserves were putting up a [illegible] to the east border with Honduras. [illegible] Ostrom [illegible]

looming in the distance in a perfect Fujiesque cone, giant earthmovers painted in green-and-black camouflage lumbered across the mudflats, scooping monstrous rocks from the bed of the Chilanguera River. A cluster of African-American engineers in yellow hard hats and olive fatigues—"Bravo Company, 511 467th Engineering Battalion, Greenville, Mississippi. What can we do for you?"—huddled around a topographical map, trying to square its obsolete representation of the meandering river with the hilly terrain of scrub and blooming jacarandas that Mitch had rearranged around them. Everything was going fine; no incidents to report, and the locals were friendly. "Wish we could understand them though," said one as he pointed over his shoulder at a group of women standing knee-deep in the river, scrubbing away at laundry on the rocks. The soldiers' de facto translator, a reservist from Puerto Rico, had gone home with the last rotation, leaving the Americans clueless as they went about their good works. "We wave and smile, and they wave and smile."

I waded across the waterway to a mud-and-stick hut perched on the opposite bank. Barefoot children chased baby chicks around the clearing amid peals of laughter. An emaciated man dressed in rags put down a bucket of water he had just hauled up from the well and sauntered over to introduce himself. "It's good, what they're doing," said Perfecto Ramos, nodding across the way at the Mississippians. "Only thing, they don't understand anything we say. Maybe you could ask if they'd push the bank up a little more on this side? I'm afraid the ground is too low here and it will flood again."

Ramos said he and his family had survived Mitch by climbing to higher ground as the Chilanguera overflowed its banks and swept over the town. But he wasn't so lucky fourteen years before, when a U.S.-supplied Cessna spotter plane rocketed his single-room dwelling. "We lived up on that hill over there." Ramos pointed to a distant ridgeline. Five members of his family were killed that day, including a daughter and three nephews. The date rolled straight off his tongue: April 18, 1985.

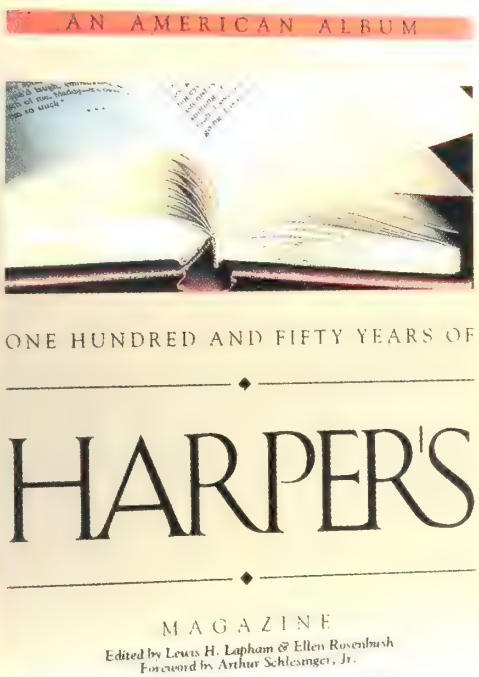
"We thank God things have changed," Ramos said. Then his face darkened. "But now we have a new problem—*los delincuentes*." Armed cattle rustlers roam the hills now, hauling away farm animals with impunity. "We don't know who they are, because the police never come here to investigate." Ramos said he had begun tethering his goats and pigs at night to the poles on his open-air porch, hoping to save his animals from the bandits.

On Guazapa three weeks before, I had heard similar tales of *cuatreros* rounding up animals from pastures at night, loading them on large flatbeds, taking them off to black market buyers and clandestine slaughterhouses. It seemed cattle rustling was rapidly developing into a national industry. Fearing the rustlers would kidnap their animals in the dead of night, farmers were beginning to share their living quarters with chickens, pigs, and cows. But even then, masked gunmen were kicking in doors, using the occasion to take away not only the animals but their owners as well. "No one opposes them," one peasant had told me, "because they have the guns."

I slogged back over the river and communicated Ramos's message to the Greenville engineers. They cheerfully agreed to rework the bank. "So that's what he was trying to tell us." I chose not to mention the bandits lurking in the hills around them; I didn't want to give them my thoughts about oiling up their M-16s. But despite the indubitable service the reservists were performing for the people of Chilanguera, I found something vaguely disturbing about their presence. Or perhaps what bothered me more was the *timing* of their presence. I had the feeling the C-5 Galaxy time machines that dropped them from the sky had overshot by twenty years. I wondered what might have been if we had come here with the tractors and backhoes two decades back, when it really could have counted. And if we had left the guns at home. Maybe then there could have been a New El Salvador after all. ■

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DON'T JUDGE HIS HEART

Is our notion of the Founding Fathers' "characters" relevant material for history?

By James Bowman

Burr, Hamilton, and Jefferson: A Study in Character by Roger G. Kennedy. Oxford University Press. 476 pages. $30.

Roger G. Kennedy's latest book is subtitled "A Study in Character." But it is also a study in historical reputation. Kennedy's aim is to shock received opinion by rehabilitating Aaron Burr, but while simultaneously and necessarily derogating the reputations of Burr's two most prominent political enemies, Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. His method of case-making with [illegible] but it raises certain questions of historiographical propriety. Kennedy attempts [illegible] three American heroes by a minute examination of their *own* symptoms [illegible] Indians, for example) as well as their psychological makeup in ways that [illegible]

The "honor" with which Burr, [illegible] Hamilton and Jefferson were concerned [illegible] Burr and Hamilton were born (the *OED*'s first citation, an ambiguous one, is from 1647). During their lives it probably [illegible] the sense that it still bore in living memory—of [illegible] Hence the [illegible] search [illegible] "character" that would [illegible]

Alexander Pope famously [illegible] that "most women have no characters at all," but perhaps [illegible] to the [illegible] the [illegible]

will roughly correspond with those internal qualities—compassion, consideration, tolerance, kindliness, and so forth—that we value most highly, but reputation itself, without them, is worthless and would amount to hypocrisy, insincerity. These are among Kennedy's most damning charges against Hamilton and Jefferson. But is it quite fair for us to blame these men because they valued other things, including reputation, more highly than sincerity?

The idea of "character" is not something fixed and permanent. Even if the contemporaries of these three figures were not in a better position to judge their characters than we are, they would nonetheless have meant something different by "character" than what we mean. The word itself, in the sense of the sum of a person's moral qualities, was little more than a century old at the time Burr and Hamilton were born (the *OED*'s first citation, an ambiguous one, is from 1647). During their lives it probably [illegible] the sense that it still bore in living memory—of [illegible] Hence the [illegible] search [illegible] "character" that would [illegible]

Alexander Pope famously [illegible] that "most women have no characters at all," but perhaps [illegible] to the [illegible] the [illegible]

word meant then what it does today. His is the first *OED* citation under today's usual meaning of "moral qualities strongly developed or strikingly displayed" (an instance of how often the lexicographer's art involves interpretation as well as research), and the remark is an illustration of the fact that in the eighteenth century, where the word "character" did not mean simply "reputation," it referred to (or at least implied) masculine, military, and upper-class qualities of mind and heart. Before "character," there was "honor," a word that, as we know, was still habitually in use by Burr, Hamilton, Jefferson, and their contemporaries, and was used traditionally to refer to these same qualities.

Or, as one should more properly say, to the reputation for them, since the two things are generally impossible to disentangle before the mid-nineteenth century, when, in English-speaking countries, at any rate, it began to be possible to say that a man's actual character and his reputation were at variance without having to fight a duel over it. In particular, the willingness to fight was itself the essential qualification for a man of honor. What remained of the chivalric code regarded cowardice as the only unpardonable sin, and so displays of courage at times took on the character of an elaborate charade. By the same token, where there was courage and prowess to enforce it, the character of reality itself was altered. Reality didn't matter so long as reputation was preserved. Thus in Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, everyone agrees that Sir Launcelot's affair with Queen Guinevere is no stain on the honor of either of them just so long as Launcelot is strong enough to kill in single combat any knight who dares to impugn the Queen's chastity.

How foreign such attitudes appear from the perspective of the present! And yet they were still familiar to the generation whose "character" Kennedy is writing about. Of course, he is free retrospectively to apply more contemporary no-

ons of character to the past—I don't he makes it clear that this is what g's doing. And few today will refrain om pooping him up for hurling, for sample, Burr's hypertrophied "sym thies," of which he hastens to apprise s at the outset. These, he says,

were more extensive than Hamilton's or Jefferson's, and his circle was more personal than Washington's. He treated people of African descent as respectfully as Europeans, and he also mingled the Founders' Burr had Indian friends. With Hamilton and John Jay, he was more than leaders of the battle to end slavery in New York. And

his proto-feminism is quoted more often than his women—an incident Mary Wollstonecraft, hanging out of "as sad a life," but was Jefferson, who had tained, "signifies," as he might have said.

sewhere, Kennedy cites nong the reasons for Burr's llings-out with his fellow publicans his "abolition alliance with Hamilton d Jay, as well as that pe dfast insistence upon the tellectual equality of cks and women to white ales, for which Mr. Jeffer n had said 'the public is t prepared not am I.'" As if all this re not recommendation enough, e had the irritating habit of re inding his contemporaries of Euro an ancestry that there were Indians who had to be included in planning the future of the North American ntinent."

So, Burr was undoubtedly a man of character for our times. Does it matter hat none of these admirably tolerant multicultural attitudes would have mitted anything at all about his char cter to his contemporaries? Some few progressive and sympathetic spirits of time, like Burr, may have thought ls of Jefferson for his attitudes toward blacks, women, and Indians, but st people did not. Most people least those who were not blacks, men, or Indians—held similar views themselves. Should Burr's more enlightened attitudes be a historical datum of any interest, except as a measure of how remarkable an exception he was, to those of us who (belatedly) share them?

There seems a certain smugness, a certain circularity in arguing that Burr was a better man than Hamilton or Jefferson because he was more like us,



more like what twenty-first-century America, as opposed to eighteenth-century America, thinks a man ought to be. This kind of exercise is a subcategory of what the British historian Herbert Butterfield called the Whig Interpretation of History—the sort of triumphalist progressivism that holds that history's implicit purpose is revealed by the fact that it has produced enlightened fellows like ourselves. It follows that if the past is only interesting to us insofar as it has produced the present, then its most important and valued figures will be those who are most like us.

In other words, it may or may not be true that Burr was a more modern man than either Jefferson or Hamilton (at least as strong an argument could be made for Jefferson, it seems to me), but it is possible to make him appear more favorable by appealing to those qualities in him that are chronologically modern. We are prepared to like Burr better than people used to like him because he is more the kind of thing we like, as Gore Vidal first recommended in his 1973, fictional rehabilitation of the man in his novel *Burr*, written nearly thirty years ago.

Kennedy shares a number of Vidal's assumptions, finding in Burr not just a misunderstood and falsely maligned figure, a tarnished star among the glittering galaxy of the Founders in need of polishing up, but in some ways the only one of them who deserves still to shine at all. Even Washington, memorable from Vidal's novel for his stupidity, military incompetence, political cunning, and enormous rear end, also suffers by comparison with Burr in Kennedy's account. Washington, in this telling, "was unforgiving to anyone unwilling to subordinate personal preference to patriotic duty . . . defined by Washington, as by most Great Men, as duty to him." Jefferson, it is hinted, was not only a slave owner and a hypocrite but also a coward and a dilettante ledger-*a coût le k* [illegible] and an incompetent governor of Virginia to boot.

Most strikingly, Kennedy also follows Vidal in speculating that the enmity between Burr and Hamilton had deep psychological roots—to wit, Hamilton's seeing in Burr a kind of doppelganger, a "projected" image of himself that ultimately had to be destroyed. Regarding a letter of Hamilton's critical of Burr, Kennedy writes that "the portrait of Burr presented by Hamilton was of his own shadow-self, a picture that would have been more compelling had he criticized Burr for qualities not conspicuously his own, for example, gaudiness, such as ostentatiousness or being pathetically credulous beneath a cynical demeanor." A chance remark that Hamilton made about Burr's manner "is an emergence," says Kennedy, "of [illegible]



J	A	M	B	E	Q	U	A	T	I	O	N
A	P	E	R	C	U	D	E	R	I	D	E
Y	L	G	A	H	A	S	S	I	D	O	C
W	O	N	D	E	R	S	O	P	A	R	K
A	M	O	R	E	T	O	P	A	Z	E	R
L	B	S	A	S	S	S	T	R	I	D	E
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F	U	J	I	E	P	E	R	V	E	R	T
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Y	A	R	D	A	G	E	S	L	A	S	H

What's in this mean? What is "tas
nation"? Clinically, it is being powe
fully drawn by the gravitational force
oneself, in projection. And in Ham
ton's case that projected self was a pe
son whose "ambition is unlimited
whose "sole spring of action is an ino
dinate ambition." Burr's ambition! Th
from a man who had written of himse
"The love of fame [is] the ruling passi
of the noblest minds." Burr was not gi
en to passion; Hamilton was; yet h
wrote of Burr: "He is of a temper to u
dertake the most hazardous enterpris
That is exactly what John Adams sa
of Hamilton.

Hamilton, it should be noted, was pro
ably half-quoting Milton's "Lycidas'

> Fame is the spur that the clear spi
> doth raise
> (That last infirmity of noble mind) .

In any case, it is not quite fair
equate this "noble" love of fame wi
"ambition"—a word that, in the En
lish of Hamilton's time, still retain
much of its original pejorative sens
This is its usual sense in Shakespear
who has Brutus cry out to the crowd
ter the murder of Caesar, "ambition
debt is paid," and has Wolsey wa
Cromwell, "I charge thee, fling aw
Ambition" for "By that sin fell the A
gels." In the same way, Macbeth
tempts to draw back from the murd
of Duncan by noting that:

> I have no spur
> To prick the sides of my intent, b
> only
> Vaulting ambition, which o'erlea
> itself,
> And falls on the other

In all these uses of the term there
an underlying assumption of a hiera
chical social order in which it wou
still have been thought a virtue
know and keep to one's proper pla
Honor, too, and therefore characte
depended on giving and receiving r
spect according to one's place in the h
erarchy. "Ambition," therefore, cou
mean either a passion to rise abo
one's place illegitimately or throu
criminal acts, as it so often does
Shakespeare, or the noble desire
distinguish oneself in one's prop
sphere. Yet this state of affairs was

...changing in the new Federal Republic, and Hamilton, "the bastard brat of a Scotch pedlar" (as John Adams called him) from the West Indies, had more reason to know this than most Americans of the period. Having risen by his own talents and efforts to the highest rank among his contemporaries, he made the aristocratic assumptions and used the aristocratic language of the time while in himself summing up the two historical tendencies that were already undermining them.

The first of these was what we now call industrial capitalism. Hamilton's rise in the world, assisted by the patronage of the great, was remarkable for its time; in the time to come it would be less so, and even more the product of individual effort. The economic liberty and dynamism of the early Republic were sweeping away social hierarchies where they were strongest, and by the time that Hamilton's widow died, aged ninety-seven, in 1854, the aristocratic conventions that had both schooled and killed her husband scarcely survived in America outside the plantation economy of the Deep South. More important, however, was the second development, which displaced the aristocracy of birth and wealth and honor with the aristocracy of feeling, whose earliest grandees were the European Romantics but whose most congenial territory was and still in many ways is that of American democracy.

The best intellectual road map tracing the growth and development over the past two centuries of the Empire of Feeling is still Lionel Trilling's *Sincerity and Authenticity*, but we must now attempt the difficult imaginative leap of trying to put ourselves in the place of those who did not take for granted that particular empire's sway, and to adopt for a moment as our own the habit of mind in which reputation, called honor, had value in its own right. Only thus can we learn to see Kennedy's revisionism in its proper light.

First we must notice how striking is this book's audacious attempt to sell us on its hero, Aaron Burr, as an early prototype of contemporary man, man in the Age of Feeling. True, Burr seems to have anticipated some distinctively contemporary feelings, but what similarities of this kind could be half as striking as the staggering differences between us and those to whom dueling seemed a natural way to settle disputes? The "affair of honor," like honor itself, to a greater or lesser extent, is one of those features of the historical landscape—like monasticism or monarchy, the Crusades or the Inquisition, slavery or the subordination of women—that we simply accept (often by condemning them), because they seem so impossible to understand.

The seminal recent work in attempting to understand the "affair of honor," cited by nearly all historians who write on the subject, is an article by the "historian-ethnographer" Joanne B. Freeman, called "Dueling as Politics: Reinterpreting the Burr-Hamilton Duel." Kennedy himself cites it, with gratitude, in a footnote, adding dryly that "she does not, however, seem to support the view that Hamilton was psychologically driven to make Burr his executioner, as I do." No indeed! What she does do, however, is nicely sum up for us what Kennedy's efforts are up against, the reason why Burr's reputation has been in eclipse almost since the fatal morning of July 11, 1804, when, as vice president of the United States, he shot and mortally wounded Alexander Hamilton on Weehawken Heights, New Jersey.

Most duels of the period, writes Freeman, were "intricate games of dare and counter-dare, ritualized displays of bravery, military prowess, and, above all, willingness to sacrifice one's life for one's honor," but it was relatively rare for them to end in fatalities. Hamilton himself had been involved in twelve previous affairs of honor, and in none had a shot been fired until the shot that killed him. The game usually involved a search on both sides for a formula that would nullify the insult that had been the casus belli without requiring anything so blatant as an outright apology, which was usually considered tantamount to an admission of cowardice. Burr, however, not only insisted on the apology that Hamilton could not honorably give but refused to specify the precise offense, referring only to a third party's

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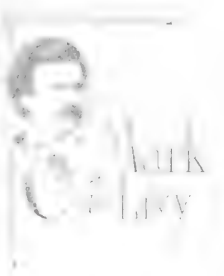
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vague report that Hamilton had expressed a "despicable opinion" of Burr at a dinner party.

Whatever the "opinion" was, it has been lost to history (Gore Vidal speculates the charge was that Burr had slept with his own daughter). As Freeman writes, Hamilton's attempts to smooth things over were rejected:

> Burr later received criticism for challenging a man for an unspecified affront. Hamilton himself objected that Burr's inquiry was too vague for "a direct avowal or disavowal." But Burr felt such a compelling need to prove himself a man of honor and a political leader that he responded to Hamilton's protests by broadening his demands: he demanded an apology for any "rumours derogatory to Col. Burr's honor . . . inferred from any thing he [Hamilton] has said." In essence, he called on Hamilton to apologize for any personal abuse that Burr had suffered throughout their fifteen-year political rivalry. Burr demanded a humiliating apology in order to force Hamilton to fight.

All this was bad enough, but worse was to come. On the night before he crossed the Hudson to Weehawken, a favorite dueling ground, Hamilton wrote a letter to his wife in which he stated his intention not to fire at Burr with his first shot because of his "scruples as a Christian." Moreover, in an equally Christian spirit, he insisted that he bore no ill will toward Burr.

Kennedy expresses doubts about both these statements. Two shots were fired almost simultaneously that morning. One passing above Burr's head broke a branch of the tree under which he was standing. The other hit Hamilton in the abdomen. Hamilton had told his second, Nathaniel Pendleton, that he would fire in the air, but there was no way of knowing if Burr had done so or if he had merely missed. The pistols they used had a hair trigger that Hamilton knew all too well, but Burr did not. Hamilton is said to have cocked that the hair trigger might have gone off at once, have been anyway, or unbeknownst to him. Understandably, thinks Kennedy, it cannot be the case that Hamilton [illegible] Burr "distinct from political opposition," even [illegible] on the political principles, character, and views of Col. Burr . . . have been extremely severe." Kennedy asks: "was Hamilton's self-deception so complete that he could be conscious of no ill will toward a man he charged with dishonesty, profligacy, Caesarian ambition, and Catalinian conspiracy?"

Why is it "self-deception" for Hamilton to attempt to preserve a distinction between his moral and rational censure of Burr's political actions and his private and personal feelings about him? It's true that public and private have always been mixed together in politics, but that does not mean that there is no point in attempting, as Hamilton did, to distinguish between them. It is Kennedy who has to break down this distinction in order to make his case that the quarrel between Hamilton and Burr must have been owing to "fascination" or some such private and personal feeling. Thus he writes that "Hamilton, the man of passionate affection, was also given to passionate antipathy; as to Burr, envy wore channels into his psyche until it became a fascination 'settled and implacable.' Burr's reciprocal animosity settled in more slowly . . ."

But even if Kennedy is right, the elusive reality of the two men's state of mind was irrelevant before the Empire of Feelings held sway, and, strictly speaking, is irrelevant now. For what matters now, and what was beginning to matter then, was public opinion about the state of those feelings. Freeman wrote:

> A duelist who killed his opponent could erase his crime only by proving himself a man of honor who had conformed with the rituals of the duel. But in seeking a vague offense and exhibiting uncompromising hostility in his correspondence, Burr left himself open to charges of dishonorable conduct. . . .
>
> Though he defeated his opponent on the field of honor, Burr thus became a failed duelist, for he was unable to sway public opinion in his favor.

Later he was to compound the offense by abusing his dead opponent for "malevolence and hypocrisy" at a time when Hamilton's final letter was revealed, "an intimate, heartfelt statement," as Freeman puts it, "that pro

essed his willingness to die for the public good." In it, she writes, "he depicted himself as an exemplary duelist, compelled to fight, unwilling to kill, gaining nothing, sacrificing all. There was no more effective way to prove oneself a martyr and to prove one's foe, by default, a friend." Besides, whether or not Hamilton threw away his first shot, it was widely believed that he had, and this too helped him to win—posthumously, to be sure—the battle for public opinion.

This emphasis on public opinion is Freeman's real contribution to recent thinking about honor. For centuries the gentry in all European countries engaged in duels among themselves without caring what those not in the honor group of fellow "gentlemen" thought of them for it. To be sure, public opinion was involved (it always is in matters of honor and reputation), but the public was a very small one. Freeman shows how, in the early days of the American Republic, the duelists found themselves on the first time performing, as it were, before a wider audience. The aristocratic pastime of challenging and being challenged, of making a show of one's honor, were now taking place in a democratic arena in which honor depended not only on the opinion of one's honorable friends but also on that of the base multitude.

Hamilton, the illegitimate West Indian of no particular birth, may have understood this better than the more aristocratic Burr, whose father and grandfather were presidents of Princeton. But in any case, public opinion has been against Burr for two hundred years. Kennedy devotes a major part of his postscript to the reasons for Burr's poor reputation down to the present day. More important even than Hamilton in this regard, he says, was Harriet Beecher Stowe's portrayal of Burr as an unscrupulous womanizer in her novel *A Minister's Wooing*. Kennedy also speculates on John Quincy Adams's possible later regret for having said, at the time of Burr's trial for treason in 1807, that Burr had "no religious principles, and little, if any sense of reverence to a moral Governor of the Universe." Kennedy takes Adams to task: How could even an Adams purport to know such a thing?" he says. "John Quincy Adams's theologically trained father would have been aware that one makes a statement about the state of another person's soul at great peril to one's own."

Well, up to a point. It is true that Christians are enjoined to "judge not, that ye be not judged," but this commandment has never until our own time been thought to prohibit judgment of behavior, or all inferences from behavior to a general state of mind, in particular the mens rea. Adams, in making the observation that Burr had never been particularly noted for his piety, was most likely just appending to the general bad character Jefferson had already succeeded in fixing on him. Kennedy reads into this an act of cosmic presumption and arrogance, I think, because it is central to his case that the disposition of the inner man is of supreme importance in determining "character," and therefore that character must be as completely disjoined from reputation as in Burr's time it was bound up with it. Elsewhere he quotes the American historian James Thomas Flexner's opinion that Hamilton "was not seriously wrung by the plight" of the slaves because he did not do much about it, and adds: "How can a historian be confident of what was in another man's heart?" Here we have what is perhaps the culmination of the "sincerity" craze of the last two centuries.

Of course, Kennedy's censure of Adams and Flexner doesn't interfere with the fact that the entire tendency of his book is to venture himself into these sacrosanct realms, to explicate the unknowable soul of Aaron Burr and pronounce it superior to those of his rivals. In doing so, he makes the case not only for a retrospective politics of feeling for the age of Hamilton and Burr but also, obliquely, for the actual politics of feeling that has become dominant in America since, roughly simultaneously, the Cold War ended and Bill Clinton announced to wide applause that he felt the pain of those who suffered from economic privation. Now the contest to elect his successor promises to be a competition of feelings. Is it not slightly odd, then, that George W. Bush has turned



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the Kennedy-like phrase "Don't judg my heart" into almost an exculpator mantra? Of course, he is not so muc reserving the inward man from scrut ny as he is insisting that whatever h may have done that you don't like, f all you know his feelings may be rea itable.

Somehow Kennedy doesn't strik me as being a Bush supporter, bu to judge by his book he would certainly applaud the Bushite reserva tion of his feelings from the harshe sort of political censure. Meanwhile John McCain, the man who was i some ways the most popular politicia of the year, made his first and to man his greatest claim on our approval wit his military record—his record, that i not of conquering our nation's ene mies but of suffering at their hands. I this it could be said that he was ind rectly paying tribute to the legacy Alexander Hamilton, the first sain and martyr of the American Found ing, who, intentionally or not, was th first to benefit by the expansion of th old, aristocratic notions of honor int the new and democratic realm of pub lic opinion.

The old aristocrats would naturall have been as contemptuous as Shake speare was of the sweaty night-cappe mob in *Julius Caesar*, for example, wh were impressed with Marc Antony' ostentatious emotion in his funer oration for Caesar. "Poor soul! His eye are red as fire with weeping." But th new elite has had to accommodate it self to democratic demands—which i why Kennedy's rehabilitation effort i ultimately doomed. Like that othe vice president Dan Quayle, poor ol Burr made his bad impression in th public eye and could never thereafte live it down—still cannot live it down even after two hundred years. Tru enough, his heart, like George W Bush's, might well be a veritable gush er of creditable feelings and, could w but know it, prove him a better man than either Hamilton or Jefferson. Bu history, as Kennedy himself remind us, cannot judge the heart. It can and will judge only what our leaders are prepared to say about their hearts, and what they are able to make people be lieve about them, in order to be al lowed to lead.

A COURT OF NO APPEAL

How one obscure sentence upset the *New York Times*

By Renata Adler



In January of this year, Simon & Schuster published my book *Gone: The Last Days of The New Yorker*. I had been at *The New Yorker* since 1963—with an absence of about fourteen months, during which I was Bosley Crowther's successor as the film critic of the *New York Times*. Although I had written for other publications, I thought I knew the magazine pretty well. *The New Yorker*, I wrote, is dead. I did not expect everyone to agree or to welcome my account of what happened to the magazine. Perhaps not surprisingly, the colleagues whom I had loved and admired through the years tended to share my views. Those of whom I thought less highly, and whom I portrayed less admiringly, did not.

Throughout the book, I referred to matters in the outside world, politics, travels, issues, assignments taken and not taken, discussions with William Shawn, the great editor, who, over a period of more than thirty years, naturally grew old, declined, and lost control of his magazine. A young editor whom I met in January said he thought I had treated *The New Yorker* as though it were the proverbial canary in a mine shaft. Its death meant something about the capacity of any living creative enterprise to survive within the culture. The thought had not crossed my mind. It has crossed my mind now.

On November 11, 1999, when my book was still in galleys, Charles McGrath, the editor of *The New York Times Book Review*, wrote to Simon & Schuster. McGrath had for many years been an editor at *The New Yorker*. I had described his tenure there in less than admiring terms. I had also raised questions about what seemed to me an inherent conflict of interest in his having assigned to himself, when he became editor of the *Book Review*, the review of another book in which he figured. "The other day," McGrath now wrote, "I received the galleys of Renata Adler's forthcoming book. As is my custom, I read through it prior to assigning [it] for review." He described as a "complete fabrication" an account of a lunch at which he had speculated to his cousin Laura ("who is not my cousin but, rather, my cousin-in-law") that he was, at that very moment, being designated successor to the editorship of the magazine. The lunch had, in fact, been described to me by several people. My account was harmless; it certainly had no libelous implications. (McGrath's letter ended with "cc" to an attorney.)

Renata Adler is a graduate of the Yale Law School and the author of several books. A collection, Pitches, will be published in the spring.

1979, by Norton) of Judge John J. Sirica, Jack Sirica's father. The sentence in question said I had found [illegible] hero, Sirica was in fact a corrupt, incompetent, and dishonest figure, [illegible] connections to Senator Joseph McCarthy and elements of [illegible] Jack Sirica had challenged me "to produce any evidence [illegible] that his father was [illegible] incompetent and dishonest" and had "dared to engage in [illegible]." He demanded that Simon & Schuster "issue a public & written retraction" and "remove the references" from all future editions of the book. He distributed his letter widely to his colleagues in the press. A reporter from the Associated Press called me and asked, in highly professional and neutral terms, whether I planned to document my remarks in any way. I said I did. The reporter asked when. I said soon. The reporter asked [illegible] where. I said in any place that seemed appropriate.

Some days later, I had a call from Fehrenbach Barringer, a Media correspondent for the *New York Times*. Barringer [illegible] to Philip Taubman, a member of the *Times* editorial board [illegible] editor of the editorial page. From the outset, the conversation lacked the slightest tincture of an "interview." Barringer did not even pretend to any interest in Sirica, only [illegible] "Would [illegible] my 'sources'? 'Common knowledge,' I said. 'Look it up.' Her dead line was eight that day. 'No. Why would I not disclose my evidence, if any, to her?' Because, as the A.P. reported, I [illegible] Why, [illegible] I was writing [illegible] In the meanwhile, she asked several times, about what I had done to Judge Sirica's reputation? I said I didn't think most people relied [illegible] Sirica on a sentence in a book about *The* [illegible] and that, in fact, I had so much as mentioned the passage [illegible] Jack Sirica [illegible] "Will you [illegible]

It [illegible] wish to "disclose" [illegible] sources to other [illegible] interview. Barringer said: "Why don't you [illegible] the Internet?" "You [illegible] your own pieces on the Internet, do you [illegible]?"

It must be said that, although I was not, as far as I know, discourteous I was not particularly deferential or awestruck either. This was, it was true, the *Times*. It was also an unusually repetitive and mindless interrogation. The game and its rituals, anyway, are fairly set. The reporter will write what she chooses—most frequently [illegible] regardless of what is said. It is one of the many reasons I have always preferred to work with documents. Barringer had a final question: was my source Gordon Liddy? No.

The following Monday, April 3, Barringer's piece appeared on the front page of the Business section. On Wednesday, April 5, a piece, by Eleanor Randolph, but unsigned (I had mentioned Randolph unfavorably in the book), appeared as an Editorial. On Thursday, April 6, there was an Op Ed piece, written by, of all people, John W. Dean. On Sunday, April 9, the *Times* published the last (at least so far) of these pieces in its Week in Review.

Barringer's article was, in its way, exemplary. In my "offhanded evisceration of various literati," she reported, not many people had noticed "Mortimer Adler's drive-by assault on the late Judge Sirica." She deplored the lack of "any evidence" and managed to convey her conviction that none existed. Barringer's own "sources," on the other hand, were the following: Jack Sirica (whom she did not identify as a *Newsday* reporter); John F. Stacks, who co-wrote Judge Sirica's autobiography (and who said Sirica "didn't have the imagination to be anything other than absolutely straight all his life"); "those who have read just about all the books on Watergate" and "those most steeped in Watergate lore" (whether these "those" were so extensive was not clear); two lawyers, who confirmed that "the dead cannot sue for libel"; an editor, who did not claim to know either me or anything about Sirica, who "explained" (not, for Barringer, "said") in [illegible] paragraphs of a bizarre fantasy what I must have said to my editor and he to me ("It is, 'Love me, love my

book." If that's what she wants to say . . . or rather do the book or don't do it"); and Bob Woodward, co-author of *All the President's Men*, who "absolutely never heard, smelled, saw or found any remote suggestion" that Sirica had ever had "any connection" to organized crime.

An impressive roster—in a way. I had once, as it happened, unfavorably reviewed on the front page of *The New York Times Book Review* itself, a book by Woodward, but he was certainly the most impressive of Barringer's sources in this piece. Woodward could, of course, have crept into Judge Sirica's hospital room and elicited from him on his deathbed the same sort of "nod" he claimed to have elicited from CIA director William Casey on his deathbed, and then claimed, as he did with Casey, that to divulge even the *time* of this alleged hospital visit would jeopardize his source. And when asked, as he was in an interview, what color pajamas the patient was wearing, he could, as he did in the instance of Casey, express a degree of outrage worthy of the threat such a question poses to the journalist's entire vocation. That is evidently not a kind of sourcing that raises questions for a media correspondent at the *Times*.

Barringer, in any case, did not conceal her views or quite limit her account to a single issue. "The attack on the basic honesty and decency of the Judge," she wrote, "is of a piece with the whole work." Then came a memorable line: "What she writes and when she writes it, she said," Barringer actually wrote, with all the severity of the bureaucrat deep in a politburo, "is for her to decide." Who else, I wondered, at least in our society, could possibly decide it? Her essential formulation, however, was this:

> As it stands, Ms. Adler and Simon & Schuster, a unit of Viacom, are either cheaply smearing Judge Sirica with legal impunity . . . or they have evidence.
>
> But neither the publisher nor the author shows any urgency about resolving the issue, either by retracting the accusation or establishing its accuracy.

Nick Sirica merely demanded "any evidence whatsoever." Barringer wanted evidence (to her standards, presumably, and Woodward's), with "urgency" and "establishing . . . accuracy." Otherwise, in spite of that lamentable "legal impunity," a retraction. An interesting position, from a reporting, a First Amendment, or even a censorship point of view. I will return to that, and even get to the evidence about Judge Sirica. But first a bit more about conditions in the mine shaft.

The Editorial, two days later, entitled "A Question of Literary Ethics," ran immediately below a slightly shorter piece, "The Pursuit of Justice in Bosnia." "In an irritable little book published late last year about The New Yorker," it began. Why the *Times* would address an entire editorial to a "little book," "irritable" or not, was not entirely clear. One might have thought that, almost thirty years after Watergate and more than sixty years after some of the events in question, the country really does turn for its information about Judge Sirica to a passage in a book about *The New Yorker* magazine. "Since Judge Sirica is dead," the Editorial again pointed out, "he is unable to sue for libel." True enough. "But that does not lift the ethical burden from Ms. Adler to support her charges with evidence she says exists" but "that she and her editors at Simon & Schuster, for some unfathomable reason, omitted from her book." Then, a new standard, not just "evidence" but a cognate of proof, crept in. "If Ms. Adler is raising a long-simmering allegation [about] Judge Sirica's father . . . she will need to document that unproven contention and show how it relates to the judge himself."

It was interesting to learn what I needed to document and show. I found it difficult, however, to see in what sense my "burden" was (as the anonymous Randolph put it) "ethical"—or how the passage in my book could have raised an issue of "ethics," "literary" or other Professional issues, perhaps. Issues of fact, history, judgment. Ethics, no. I was either right or I wasn't, and I either had evidence or I hadn't. (The questions were, by no means, the same.) The *Times*, as it turned out, had not the slightest interest in Sirica or his history. No reporter for the *Times*, or, as far as I know, any other publication made any effort to investigate the nature of the connection with Senator McCarthy for alleging the basis for an assertion of "clear ties to organized crime." But lack of curiosity seemed to me extraordinary. The sole preoccupation was with a kind of meta-journalistic question: not what happened but what were my sources and my obligations. As to what was, however, "for some unfathomable reason, omitted," the *Times* had only to look at its own Op-Ed piece the following day.

That piece, entitled "A Source on Sirica" consisted of John Dean's speculation about something the *Times* had reason to know not to be the case: that my "source" was Dean's old enemy and current adversary in an embittered lawsuit, G. Gordon Liddy. What was remarkable, however, was less the content of the piece than the words with which the *Times* identified its author. The caption, in its entirety, read as follows:

> *John W. Dean was counsel to President Richard M. Nixon and the author of* Blind Ambition.

If this is the way Dean will enter history, then all the *Times* pieces in this peculiar episode have value.

That Sunday, April 9, there was the Week in Review section. A single sentence, in a book published months before, had now become part of the news, perhaps more accurately the meta-news, of that week. The word "evidence" was abandoned, replaced entirely by "proof." My book had "announced without proof"; "Ms. Adler told a New York Times reporter that she would publish proof . . . when she pleased," and so on. I had said nothing of the kind. In repeating what had long been a *Times* characterization of Judge Sirica as "a scrupulously honest jurist," the piece surpassed even the Op-Ed page in the brevity of its identification of John Dean as "former Nixon counsel." The laconic formulation was apparently designed to lend him credibility, in contrast to G. Gordon Liddy, "whom Judge Sirica sentenced to prison for his role in Watergate." Under the circumstances, this would [illegible] howler. Dean, [illegible] convicted to prison [illegible]

tions, in particular, always seem to consist of rectifications of middle initials, photo captions, and remote dates in history. (In one recent week, the Corrections column pointed out that the correct spelling of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's "given name" is "Madeleine K. Albright, not Madeline," and that the middle name of William D. Fugazy, "the chairman of the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations" is "Denis," "not Dennis.") There *are*, as a rule, no genuine corrections. These departments are cosmetic, a pretense that the paper has any real concern, any mechanism even to consider, whether what it has published is, in some important or, for that

I read Sirica's book, I noticed what seemed to me astonishing discrepancies and revelations. I did some research, gave the matter thought, and decided not to review the book. I was sure newspaper or magazine journalists would pick up these anomalies and write about them. By the time I published my book about *The New Yorker*, I assumed other journalists *had* found and written about them. I turned out they had not—had, it seemed, no interest in these matters apart from the recent questioning of my right to address them, even now.

> *contrary to his reputation as a hero. Sirica was in fact a corrupt, incompetent, and dishonest figure with close connections to Senator Joseph McCarthy and clear ties to organized crime.*

There can scarcely be any question that this sentence is true. One major source for almost every element of my characterization is Sirica's own story, as told in interviews and in his book. That Sirica had a "close connection to Senator Joseph McCarthy" is not in dispute—although, as far as I know, I was the first reporter to call attention to it. Certainly no major piece, book, newspaper, or magazine article about Sirica, or Watergate, or Senator McCarthy for that matter—even mentioned the connection. Certainly not (until its recent reaction to Jack Sirica's reaction to my book) the *New York Times*.

Sirica's own account is as follows. In 1952,

> while in Chicago, I ran into Senator Joe McCarthy. We had been friends for several years, double-dating once in a while and going to the racetrack together from time to time. I liked him in those days.
>
> Then in 1953, Joe McCarthy offered me the chief counsel to his Senate subcommittee which was investigating Communist influence in government.
>
> I must say that I found the offer very attractive. I wasn't especially excited by McCarthy's charges about Communist infiltration, but it seemed at the time to be an important matter that needed further examination. By the time McCarthy made his offer, I had moved over to Hogan and Hartson and was finally earning a decent living. But I was still intrigued by his proposal.

THE *NEW YORK TIMES*, CLEARLY, WAS CROSS ABOUT SOMETHING. BUT THERE ARE ETHICAL ISSUES, I THINK, RAISED EVEN BY THIS SORT OF PILING ON

even, of the question of a tape. On April 6, I received a phone call from the secretary to the deputy editor of the Editorial page. "They have decided not to run your letter," she said, in a very cheery voice. They have? I said. Did they give any reason? "No. They just asked me to call and tell you they have decided not to run your letter." April 6 was the day they ran the Op Ed piece by John Dean. On April 7, Israel Shenker in the *New York Post* ran a piece quoting from my letter (which had been given to him by Blake Fleetwood, [illegible] in another letter to the *Times* [illegible] "a publication by the *Times* [illegible] not run your letter, although it ran an article by John Dean."

matter, unimportant way, false.

This, I would say, raises issues, fundamentally, of ethics. So does covering up conflicts of interest: unsigned editorials by writers mentioned unfavorably in books the editorials disparage; quotations, without any acknowledgment of conflict, from "sources" whose work, whose very methods, has been attacked by the person under discussion, in the pages of the *Times* itself. So does the concealment of undeniably relevant information—the fact that Jack Sirica was not just the son of Judge Sirica but a reporter at Newsday, a journalistic colleague of someone the *Times* [illegible] to the defense, against a single passage, of the father of anyone who was not a fellow journalist), even the omission of virtually defining facts about John Dean. And, finally, the bullying, the disproportion, in publishing eight disparaging pieces (seven in non-reviewing sections) about what was, after all, one little book. The *Times*, clearly, was cross about something. But there are ethical issues, I think, raised even by this sort of piling on.

The irony, then, at last to Judge Sirica [illegible] twenty years ago when

Lucy [Sirica's wife, whom he had married the year before, at the age of forty-seven] ... was strongly opposed, feeling that since I was now a partner in a good firm, I would be foolish to leave. Joe stopped by our apartment one evening and I told him I felt I had better stay where I was. He agreed that it would be a mistake to leave a good firm like Hogan and Hartson. He told me that since I wasn't going to take the job, he was probably going to hire a young New York lawyer named Roy Cohn. . . . I would never have become a federal judge if I had taken that job with Joe McCarthy. I'm sure, looking back, that had I still been single, I would have done so. Thank God for Lucy Camalier Sirica.



There is something almost stunningly preposterous about this story. Sirica devotes less than a page to it. The friendship between Sirica, by his own account an obscure, impoverished, unsuccessful lawyer who had, for the "several years" in question, not even managed to earn a living, and Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, one of the most powerful and feared senators in Washington, makes no sense. How did they meet? What views, interests, or other friends did they have in common? How did they come to double-date? McCarthy had made his first famous speech ("I have here in my hand a list of 205 names known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party") on February 9, 1950, to the Women's Republican Club of Wheeling, West Virginia. In the intervening years, he had attacked, as virtual or outright traitors, not just the secretary of state, Dean Acheson, and General George C. Marshall but countless others, at every level of public and private life. By 1953, the McCarthy era (what Senator Margaret Chase Smith called the "Four Horsemen of Calumny: Fear, Ignorance, Bigotry, and Smear") was already at its height. Judge Sirica's position ("I wasn't especially excited by McCarthy's charges about Communist infiltration, but it seemed at the time to be an important matter that needed further examination") is not just inherently equivocal and mane. It is also irreconcilable with the intemperate, opinionated man Sirica and his admirers have always admitted him to be. Leaving aside his lack of professional qualifications, Sirica has entirely omitted from this account any ideological basis for McCarthy's offer of this job to him. Roy Cohn, after all, had credentials of a sort: his agenda, his methods, and his ideology were clear.

In Sirica's account, nothing — neither the politics that produced the offer nor the social circumstance that fostered the friendship — is revealed.

The rest of his story, as he describes it, and as his legend would have it, turns out to make no sense either. Born in 1904, in Waterbury, Connecticut, Sirica is the impecunious, poorly educated, and for many years unsuccessful son of Ferdinand (Fred) Sirica, an Italian-American barber, who also seems to fail at everything. Between 1910 and 1918, for example, Ferdinand takes the family on "a sad sort of odyssey, moving from city to city," Dayton, Jacksonville, New Orleans, Jacksonville again.

> In each place the story was much the same. My father would attempt to earn his living with one kind of business or another. Each time he would fail. In order to help support the family, I sold papers, worked in a grocery store, and did odd jobs after school and on weekends. Each time we moved, the rent we paid was a little less than it had been in the city we had left.

In 1918, "uprooted again," they move to Washington, D.C., where they are so poor they can hardly find a place to live. Somehow, in this "uphill fight against poverty," Sirica manages to attend two non-parochial private high schools, Emerson Preparatory, "for a year or so," and then Columbia Preparatory. In 1921, he enters George Washington University Law School, where, within a month, he finds himself out of his depth ("I couldn't begin to understand what the professors were talking about") and quits. The following year, he goes to a better law school, Georgetown University, but again, within a month, fails to understand his courses and quits again. It is not clear why Sirica went to private schools, or what "small enterprises" his father "purchased" in all those cities, or how, having failed "each time," his father managed to purchase *any* enterprises, let alone "one kind of business or another." Sirica does not account for any of these discrepancies.

He starts boxing professionally. "I was pretty good, or at least I thought so." As early as 1921, between his first law school and his second,

> I boxed almost every day with local professional welterweights and middleweights. By the next spring I ... had begun boxing at local clubs in exhibition bouts with the professionals. I thoroughly enjoyed my new life as an athlete and felt I had finally found something at which I could excel.

In 1922, however, his father has another contretemps:

> By this time, my father, in another of his attempts to better himself, had bought a small poolroom and lunch counter on Pennsylvania Avenue, in one of the alleys near Union Station. Like [illegible] all his savings on the business, [illegible]

He has already described Cafritz as "invariably advised and encouraged me a great deal" while he was struggling through law school, and as "at the time ... counting one of the most prominent and successful real-estate developers in Washington." It is true that Morris Cafritz went on to become immensely successful in real estate in Washington—and a highly respected citizen and generous benefactor of charities of every kind. At the time he was advising, encouraging, and having breakfast with Sirica, however, he was already very wealthy. Again, one wonders, what can have been the basis of this friendship between the poor and unpromising young law student and this highly influential figure? What Sirica does not mention is that Cafritz, too, had owned establishments involved with liquor and, like Sirica's father's, bowling. In his early twenties, Cafritz had borrowed $1,422 from his father and, a few years later, according to *The Washingtonian*, "bought a saloon."

> But not just any saloon. Cafritz's was across from the Washington Navy Yard. Sales were big, business was rough. Cafritz was his own bouncer. He slept over the bar and kept a gun under his pillow to protect the profits. Cafritz soon moved from barkeeping into ... a hotel and bowling. By 1915 he was known as the bowling king of Washington.

In the event, after his breakfast with Cafritz, Sirica does take the bar exam and goes on to visit his parents in Miami. While he is down there, he finds out, by telegram and to his surprise, that he has passed. He is unable to find work as a lawyer in Miami. He goes back to Washington, finds no legal work, goes back to his family in Miami. To earlier questions about his story is added another: where, failing as he constantly does to find work, does he get the money to keep traveling back and forth to Miami? And what was his family doing there? One source of income, for Sirica, has always been, although he never quite acknowledges it, professional boxing. In Washington, as early as 1921, we know, he has been boxing "almost every day" with local professionals, and "at local clubs in exhibition bouts with the professionals." [illegible] in Miami, after "a local pro-

I

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ney, however, was Morris Ernst.

According to Sirica, this period, when "I would have had to quit the law altogether," lasted "essentially until 1949, when I joined the firm of Hogan and Hartson." He was not a success there either. On April 2, 1957 (again, it is unclear on what professional basis), he became a federal judge. By 1970, he had become the most reversed federal judge in Washington. In 1971, on the basis of seniority, he became chief judge of the circuit. In June of 1972, he read about the Watergate break-in and assigned himself the case. He ultimately tried the cases both of the break-in and the cover-up, with the results we know. Or thought we knew.

But wait a minute. To return for just a moment to 1930 and Sirica's situation, at the time of his appointment to the U.S. Attorney's Office. In 1936, Sirica writes,

> my parents had moved back to Washington from Florida. My dad was [illegible] years old, and his financial situation had improved somewhat. He had managed to buy a little house on Fourteenth Street, N.W., and I lived there during my years in the U.S. attorney's office.

The years of Fred Sirica's apparently constant business failures, and Sirica's own inability to find a job, had not been Depression years—only, beginning in 1920 throughout the country (three years earlier, in 1917 in Washington, D.C.), years of Prohibition. The 1930s, however, were Depression years—yet the "financial situation" of Sirica's father, "barbering again," had "improved somewhat," to the degree in fact that "he had managed to buy a little house on Fourteenth Street."

Not such a little house. According to the Washington city directory, the house at 6217 Fourteenth Street, N.W., was large enough so that both John J. Sirica and his brother, Andrew, had apartments there. The place where his father was "barbering again" (called, according to the directory, the Empire Barber Shop) at 523 Ninth Street, N.W., was not small either. It held fourteen chairs. The reason Fred Sirica and his wife traveled so often to Miami was that they spent part of their winters there. The Siricas were buying property in Miami. Hard to accou t for, in the heart of the Depression, ev h with fourteen chairs, on the proceed of haircuts at 25 cents per custome

According to William R. Emmo , the son of Fred Sirica's partner in t Empire Barber Shop, the barbers we salesmen, selling liquor to custome who could afford it. Packages we stored in both the back room and t basement, and Fred Sirica himself ha dled the whiskey, splitting the pr ceeds with his partner, William E. E mons. Sirica, living in his fathe house and working in the U.S. Att ney's Office, can hardly have been e tirely unaware of his father's busine Ninth Street in the 1930s had five m tion picture houses within a block a h a half of the barbershop. The Gay Theatre was only a few doors aw There was bookmaking in the back r the shoestore at 5191/2 Ninth Stre The whole neighborhood, in oth words, was not so far removed, in look and its patronage, from the po room that so seriously disillusioned t impecunious barber and his son t law student more than ten years bef Nowhere in his book, *To Set the Rec Straight*, does the author so much mention the name of the barbershop the address of the "little house" Fourteenth Street. Both can be fou under "Sirica, Fred" (and also un "Sirica, John J asst US Atty" and "E mons, Wm E") in the city direct for at least the years 1933 and 19 There were no embarrassing misu derstandings, as there had been at t time of the pool hall, at any police st tion. The police of the 1st Preci were paid off—and there was whate er protection was implied by a son w had become an assistant in the U Attorney's Office.

Even 1934, when one thinks ab it, was not just the year when Pro bition ended and Sirica quit the U Attorney's Office—and Congress last legalized professional boxing Washington. It was also a year *de* in the Depression, a particularly o time for a young lawyer to leave a g ernment job and start his "own pr tice." It was the year as well when S ica says he met Dempsey, and when tried to start and promote a boxi arena with a "local prizefighte Goldie Ahearn. It goes by now alm

ithout saying that Goldie Ahearn ould not, any more than Sirica himelf, legally have been a "local prec glatei" before 1934.

There are countless peculiarities in rica's story. His professions of patritism, for example, coupled with his ick of military service, in any capacty whatever, in World War II. He as, after all, a bachelor. The whole ar took place during what he called is "starvation period." The *Times*, in s obituary of August 15, 1992, which escribed Sirica as "indisputably . . . a ero" (and "by seemingly unanimous greement, an honest man"), particularly stressed that he was "patriotic," unabashedly patriotic," and added to s repeated characterizations of Sirica as a "hero" a military dimension.

> In World War II, he tried to get a Navy commission but failed on physical reasons. . . . So, during much of the war, he toured the country with Mr. Dempsey on bond-selling drives.

The "for physical reasons" is unlikely, onsidering Sirica's accounts of his superb physical condition—and of course here are other capacities in which a achelor lawyer, sitting idly in his ofce "waiting for the telephone to ring," ught serve in the military. In his book, irica never mentions the possibility f military service. But the *Times*'s laim that "*during much of the war*, he oured with Mr. Dempsey on bond selling drives" is beyond description. Here is the relevant passage, from *To Set the ecord Straight*:

> Jack and I had some great times together. In 1942, he was touring with the Cole Brothers Circus and wanted some company. I met the circus in North Carolina and spent three days with Jack on the circus train. I'll never forget Jack charming the ladies. . . .

n 1942, the Cole Brothers Circus was lyde Beatty's circus, with no conection to war bonds or war efforts of ny kind.

Among Sirica's unlikely, and in this ook and his legend unmentioned, iends and correspondents was FBI dictor J. Edgar Hoover. Why would a dge of Sirica's renown *not* have beme friends with the FBI director? ecause Sirica was not yet at all nowned. Hoover died in May 1972, a month before the break-in at the Watergate. His friendship with Sirica dates from the Fifties—overlapping, for all one knows, with the friendship with Senator Joseph McCarthy—when Hoover, fighting the Communist menace, was still denying the very existence of organized crime. There must be a true story here somewhere, but so far no one has told or apparently even looked into it.

> Contrary to his reputation as a hero, Sirica was in fact a corrupt, incompetent, and dishonest figure, with a close connection to Senator Joseph McCarthy and clear ties to organized crime.

That is all I said or wanted to say about the subject. If a reader were to believe that this sentence, at least as quoted and discussed in the *Times* suggests that, as Sirica was presiding over the Watergate cases he was taking payoffs from the mob, that is not a plausible reading. I was writing, after all, about Sirica's autobiography. "A close connection to Senator Joseph McCarthy"—in the phrase that directly precedes "clear ties to organized crime"—would necessarily have ended by May 2, 1957, when McCarthy died. Sirica had not yet assumed his position on the bench. If I had meant Sirica was taking such payments, on the bench or at any other time, I would of course have said so.

But enough. I do not need and never did intend to investigate the story of John J. Sirica. At the time I read his book, I had already written extensively about Watergate. I had also worked, until the day of President Nixon's resignation, for the impeachment inquiry. It only became clear, from the book itself and then in retrospect, that the legend, the accumulation of clichés, received ideas, and bromides—the "scrupulously honest" man, the "hero," who rises from humble beginnings to confront "the most powerful man on earth" and to find "the truth for the American people"—had no basis in reality.

The legend of Sirica as a "scrupulously honest" man and a "hero" rests, of course, on the Watergate trials. The conduct of those trials, criticized at the time, raises questions of all kinds. It is by no means clear, for example, why Judge Sirica regarded the crucial [illegible] as evidence that [illegible] to conduct [illegible] investigation, Sirica may have needed for several crucial months to delay them. In putting off the first trial until after the election, he said he was determined to have "a fair trial, not a quick one." Looked at [illegible] moment. His treatment of his conduct in those trials has always been precisely the matter most in dispute. On account of "back pain," he postponed the trials again, until January. It may also be that, in spite of the legend, Judge Sirica was less interested in getting at, as he put it, "the truth for the American people" than in some entirely other agenda.

It may even be that the real progression in Sirica's life was not as the legend would have it but rather this: first the man of Prohibition and illegal boxing, in the U.S. Attorney's Office; then McCarthy's man and even J. Edgar Hoover's, with whatever politics that implies; then perhaps just the Republican Party's man, its emissary to Italian communities (mostly, in those days, Democratic), then a federal judge, then Nixon's man, then, in his unprecedented use of "provisional sentencing" as a form of coercion, a vain sort of bully, who is concerned not "to sit up here like nincompoops" while the defendants are "laughing at us." Then a sort of obsessed prosecutor, who does not really discover any important truth. And finally, in his vanity and posturing, a man, a "hero," for the press.

A judge, after all, is not meant to be a hero. (The only judges in our lifetimes who, I think, could legitimately be described as heroes were Frank Johnson, Elbert Tuttle, John Minor Wisdom, and the other judges of the Fifth Circuit, who took genuine risks, and suffered for them, for justice in the South.) And judges, under the Constitution, are not meant to ascertain, least of all to prosecute or to coerce by sentencing, the "truth," "for the American people" or even for a jury. They are to preside fairly, under the adversary system [illegible] sented by lawyers for the [illegible] the defendant. [illegible] else undermine [illegible] not, under the [illegible] system where [illegible]

as though one man, the judge himself, were above it.

follows:

and simply sealed this embarrassing

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falsified transcript in his book.

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journalists. Here we find almost a p

said that my "charges" had "startl

principled jurist." "Startled" them! T

It is true, I have criticized, sometimes directly, sometimes by implication, not just Charles McGrath and the *New Yorker* but the *Times*. I had written a book, *Reckless Disregard*, that was largely a criticism of the press. There may even have been implicit criticism, in pieces I wrote over the years. In recent articles, for example, in *Vanity Fair* and the *Los Angeles Times*, I had found, in writing about the Starr Report and its accompanying volume, proof that Edmund Epp had not negated, as the *Times* op-ed reporting, "reset" "elves," under the direction of the literary agent Lucianne Goldberg, to make her way, surreptitiously, and at the last minute, to the special prosecutor's office. She had, in fact, been working for that office for almost four years.

But that did not account for it entirely. Not the eight pieces, the alternately dismissive and punitive tone, the pressure to recant. And the prose itself—there can be no clearer indication than this sort of writing that there is no news, no information, no substance there. I had written a sentence. Someone, offended, had asked me to document the sentence. I had said I would do so. Not much of a story, one would have thought. In the days when there was still a standard of reporting, and of editing, "those who have read just about all the books on Watergate" and "those most steeped in Watergate lore," however they might be, would have been utterly unacceptable, in the *Times* as sources. If the reporter had had a genuine interest in the matter, she would have "steeped" herself in "Watergate lore" and read the "books on Watergate" herself. But no. Here's what it was. At one point, in answer to it, as Felicity Barringer would have put to the question "Why wait?"—to which I gave, repeatedly, the answer that I was not waiting at all—but to a petition of yet another *ad personam* question, I said, "How can you be a working journalist and phrase a question as deeply silly as that?"

This is not the way you are supposed to talk to the *Times*. I knew that. But it was obviously was the core of the offense. So seriously did Barringer take what she attached it to, the wrong question. So seriously did the *Times* take it that the Editorial was virtually based on this intimation that a *Times*

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I have always known, and even writ

I have always known, and even writ

I have always known, and even writ

THE ONES WHO MAY KILL YOU IN THE MORNING

By Marc Nesbitt



Me and Captain Earl stand where the lawn ends, each with a side of driveway and a lantern to hold. Two black guys they dress up as jockeys: I get the checkered shirt, red and cream, number 13, helmet light like a nutshell and pants skim as a James Brown dancer. Captain Earl in vertical blue/white stripes but you can't see the number from here. His tights fit worse than mine. No matter what color suit, your gloves are always white.

An hour already with nothing to stare at but crab apples in the gravel. This is the road the wealthy live on — just gray rocks dead in their own dust, running past us, in front of us, winding through the woods. Between the crab trees, scabbed birch trunks zigzag, unsure where to twist. Our lights burn like fists. Even the rich road's nothing but stones," I say, like a torture coach.

Luckily, Earl can't hear me. Because of headphones he wedged in his helmet. He's at least forty yards and head of the lawn pole — a "Captain," I should call him — because, "We're all cream," the people who own the house told me.

My left shoulder's swollen twice the size of my right. Wind in the trees, and the leaves show their backsides. Soon they'll all be dead. I turn and face the house, at seven my lantern.

If I sprinted the whole way, I could cross this guy's lawn in three days easy. I heard his flat grass had buried him, so he hired Astrun Lords-of-Spers to make it undulate. Inhabited by Astrun Vampires, *them bonsai trees*" he'd said. Now he's got a sod wave pool four football fields long for his lawn, bending in ripples as if the house had dropped on it. Its driveway crosses the tops of the waves and tucks back in the dips beneath it.

A herd of oaks explode from here to [illegible]. Their trunks grow as you run — the grass just now rammed up through the earth, shaking with size, [illegible] rupping but. Their shadows lie long at their sides. White holiday lights come alive among the branches, large [illegible] shine on those below [illegible] forward and nightfall. It's [illegible] o'clock late September, second night of work.

First day was an afternoon picnic. Caterers dropped from the backs of [illegible] coming like Airborne, new [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] on the

Marc Nesbitt is a [illegible] at Brooklyn [illegible]

room suit. When he nears, we hear him grunt in the valleys and blow air on the rest of his high-mileage hill. Standing next to me, his red head sweats like a sausage. Somehow he kept the suit dry; probably had his pores burnt shut or some other rich-person surgery.

"What in the Helen of Troy is going on *here*?" Fatsby says, smiling, with the weight on *here* since he already knows what's going on everywhere else. He drinks from a snifter wide as a church bell.

I stand up.

"Stand up," he says.

"I am standing," I say.

"Well stay that way." He's beaming, fat and Hobbit happy; button-on porkchops for cheeks. Reminds me of this other white guy I saw in a Chinese takeout ordered the white meat chicken fried rice; circled it on the sheet menu he handed to the lady. "Ain't no dark meat in there, right?" he said. "'Cuse I can't stand dark meat." He smiled at me. When his order was ready, he asked if they had anything besides Coke.

She said, "We have iced tea?"

"Is that root beer?" he'd said. On his carton a three-tailed bird and a dragon, dancing together or fighting, depending on your mood.

Fatsby says, "We don't sit down. And we don't face the house."

"Don't mind if I do," I say. "Cheers."

He holds out a black-gloved arm's length. "Here ya go," he says.

"I'm okay. It's not that cold."

I reject point-blank his drink with the melt of formerly pine up. The ski mask swings in the dusk like a

"Really," I say. "It's only September."

He's joyous, insistent. He says, "My daughter works for me. The youngest one. Just so she'll know what it's like. So anyway, she tells me she hears this couple the other lawn, "at the Ponderson picnic, asking each other when I started hiring Orientals."

like, "You don't gotta tell me twice" or "You and me both, pal." But I guess that line's been scratched b cause he keeps talking. "I said to h 'Sure! Bring em from Nam, all I car [illegible] LAWN." He points to helmet for emphasis, says seriou "You seen them before?"

"A picture maybe."

"Well there you go," he says. my daughter Carrie. She says, 'N about the lawn, about the picnic.' say, 'The picnic?' I mean, betwee you and me? Front yard, that where your tour of duty ENDS, n friend. In my back yard? I'll hire faggot brat, just to show you how feel about Orientals. That's what tell her. Except the part about th faggots. She's a runner, she's g friends—you know, she's been New York a bunch. (Her moth loves the place, ask me, it's an o house.) So I ask around about Orientals seen at the Ponderson p nic. Come to find out, everyon worked that night's black as st hons," he says. "Except one."

"I guess that's me," I say.

Now he points at me instead the lawn. "You should try out for o of them game shows," he tells m "I'm serious." Ice like fingernails cl in his snifter. When he drinks y can hear them.

"But I'm not Asian," I say.

"Hell, son, we can both see that he says. "But. No offense?"

He waits for me to nod.

"Well, no offense, but you're yel is I spoke Chunk," he says. "And I be honest, people don't need r minders of someplace they didn want to be. Or worse than th some mistake from a long time a When they were drunk or stupid whatever." He looks between o feet like what he said writhes d in the grass. Then he says, "Whi once your parents was white."

Everyone—red, white, black an blue—asks me this question. Nev enough to say somebody died, t next question's always, *How?* A whatever the answer to either or people look down, watch their sha ows trail away from a curb, noddi

I say, "My—"

"Guess it doesn't matter," he sa

n't change the facts afterward."
tell him my dad used to work for
n, that's how I got the job.
"Jimmy Christmas, no shit," he
's. "You're Nimrod's kid? Well,
we know HE wasn't the
white one'"

Two Thanksgivings ago Fatsby had
se coaches pick up party clients
m whatever dead cornfield served for
t year's airstrip. It was something's
niversary: ribbons up the coach sides,
ke lights, harness bells, he got the
dweiser Clydesdales.
Dad's assignment sat with wing tee
O'Hare and got sprayed from
nes. Dad waited at the estate in
hat and red tails, nipping whiskey
his done-up fox-hunt taxi and fig-
ng, working for Bud, the horse
nts a drink too. So he stole six
mmess from the kitchen to soak
feed bag. They made the whole
p-off—cornfield to mansion—no
blem. Only afterward did he race
two of them drunk into a tree.
The Fatsbys gave us a stainless-
el vacuum cleaner, wet dry silver-
re, a year's worth of cold-cut con-
lence. Whole thing like a theme
sent.
Plus the sum of money Mom and I
it. When I remember how much, I
nk I made up the number. I was
ang and drunk, might as well have
itted bills in empty bottles and
rown them off a bridge.
Mom took her half to move wher-
er the Canyon is and pray she
esn't fall in. Now she prays for
rything. Now she helps build stilts
her church for the next epic flood.
"Hey Ma, you live in the desert."
"Great waters come when they
l," she says. "We've seen it." She
hees at mass with her eyes closed,
gining weight like it makes her
ore faithful.
Turns out they weren't from Bud
d weren't even Clydesdales, just
horses with dye jobs and false fur
ots. Plus it'd been an old horse, al-
ys bit the trainer. The stable
guy'd said, "I'm glad it's
dead."

Eyes like loose marbles,"
sby says, is how my father would
vk at The Help. He's got a whole
jukebox of homemade cliches. He
says, "I told him, 'Trouble wants
those.' But still, 'You can't oil wood
chair to keep it from squeaking.' I
guess that's how you came about. All
that squeaking bound to lead to
something." He laughs and shakes
the ski mask. "So like I said, here ya
go." When I don't grab it, he says,
"Lighten up, kid, I'm only serious."
I take the mask.
He grins like he just bought lingerie for his daughter. "Put it on," he says.
"I will." I try changing the subject, point my chin at his house. "You got a nice place here. The lawn. Everything. Haven't seen inside, of course."
"Well you don't put cashmere rugs in a tree house, I promise you."
He tips the snifter, swallows what's left, looks in its bottom for more. "You know they call this stuff divorce juice?" he says. "I drank a tanker already and no luck so far."
We stand there watching the quiet between our faces. I think about nodding.
"So anyway, kid, put on the mask."
"How about when it gets a little colder later?"
"How about now," he says. "That's it. Now tuck it in the throat there. There ya go. Perfect. Cute as a terrorist. Not like anybody's looking twice anyway, right?"
Up the gravel comes a silver CLK driven by a thick stick of butter with a mustache. His vanity plates say CAVORT. When past us, he spits in the grass from his Benz window.
Fatsby raises a hand in hail, looks over his shoulders for friends. "Look at this," Fatsby says. "My party starts, and I'm out in the field talking to the help." He follows taillights up the driveway.

After Coach, all the guests arrive at once, cars almost hitched at the fenders. The modern-day Twenties roar along the lawn behind me.
Across the gravel and way back in the black between crab trees, deer eyes blink like ship lanterns. The undergrowth rearranges its dead wet bed. The bark scratches with hanging animals, eating the trees alive.
The mask easy on the skin as Brillo. My head melts into my shirt. All I can see are the rims of the eyes, the tree holes, the teeth, squirrel tail. I try to act as squeakless as I can.
Captain Earl says, "I'm out of batteries."
I turn my head. I like my head's broken. He's checking his hip. For the next five minutes he twitches. He folds his fingers. He whistles. Shifts his weight like a gull on a fence. Then he says, "Take off that ski mask, man. I keep thinking I'm supposed to kill you."
I can feel my helmet again, can see whatever I want. The mask in the grass, steaming like a hide.
"Stay cool, Yellow," he says. "He already forgot yall even talked. But pick it up so he don't find it in the morning. Your name's Cole, right?"
"Right."
"Cool. Smoke grass?" he asks, but he's already lit it. "Don't worry." He tips his head. "I got four more in my helmet."

Soon, he's so gone he forgets to be a tough guy. Drops his shoulders a little. Smiles in the silence and laughs on his forearms. Other than when I smoked with the Mormon hippie on his Michigan porch surrounded by iced wine in coffee cups—all of which, when he found them, were the same mug to him—this is the strangest point.
Dark completes itself. The oak herd swallow their shadows, holding them black in the trunks. The electric light gains confidence, brighter in the branches and lying in pieces on the lawn.
Captain Earl says, "I used to dishwash." Tells me his stepbrother Vince still does. Holds up his hand and spreads his fingers. "Neither one of us got no fingerprints."
"You saw that in a movie."
"Maybe," he says. "But I still ain't got fingerprints." He tells me no more cars are coming. His brother had counted the number of out-of-state plates, and Captain Earl counted heads at the gate. "And if you call me Captain one more time," he says.
But he seems all right now to me.

and complex-vexed, hand in his
fetus. Lantern somewhere around his
prom dress. Instead, her hips carve
shape in her silhouette. She slings
them side to side like she seeds fields
people pay
attention when she walk

She stands before us, marcelled
bending every right place in her
silk black pants, balancing an emp-
with Turk

"Shirley Temple," she says.
"Haven't heard that one in the last
two minutes." She
and I remem-
ber her from the intro by
head home. I stood behind her living
room glass, watching me walk to the

"Long over the picnic," I say.
"Yeah. You wore here."
"Last year, different hair."
"I noticed the same stupid T-shirt
on, I wouldn't be able to tell," she
She
brain, smiles now, bloody lipstick in
the corner of her teeth like
the hero
drunks?"
Earl
me.
"Yeah, I
it."
"Whatever what?" she says.
"
"
teach you how to act?
"My dad taught me everything.
drunk." I smile like I'm running out

S

its edges. Electricity traces the
leaves
birthday
"She's incredible," I say.
"She's
stinks," says Earl. He passes me a
fresh-lit. "I seen this episode already.
If you knew her you'd see right
through this shit. Instead, you gonna
walk around here dragging your
tongue, and this lawn'll be cleaner
when she set up in the morning." He
takes a hit, squints, pulls his chin
back like I hit him in the throat, and
stretches out. "That's what's gonna
happen. Dig out your heart with a
plastic spoon."

There were times I'd stare at what
girls picked for art—a poster of kit-
tens chewing on the same old pink
yarn ball, subtitled "Ain't friendship
great!" or the Seurat with the park
and the rich people watching a river.
Getting dorm-room head beneath
the laminated replica, I'd think,
"Would anyone dressed that nice
ever step in the grass?" But Carrie
would, and she did, and all to come
see me.

Earl says, "I think you better let
me hold on to this, cause I don't
know what the fuck you talking
about anymore. She always come
down, and bring us drinks."

"Yeah, but this time she came
down different."

"You never even seen her
before."

"She's got the black pants," I say.

"They all got black pants."

"Yes, like the black pants. Like hot
pants. But black."

"Jesus," Earl says. "And I did this
to him."

Our lanterns lie sideways in the
grass, blacking their glass. Gravel
climbs into a paintable landscape,
the crab fruit glowing something

Earl sears his lips and fingers on
what's still burning, the orange lying
"She's the
kind of girl you send her your ear
in the mail right
"What
You could be" and he
the
"That's what
they're like," he says. "Always seem

In the house, the party crosses
windows. Earl says, "Blow out yo
fire and let's go see about the
drinks."

We step down into the lawn wi
our dead lanterns behind us, the l
the balls wet with night, we kick
spray smells of piss and ginger a
sparkle when it catches
damping pants in the dark of t
valleys.

A lawn long as allegory
the end we're supposed to reali
something, realize everything we ju
came from and what it meant; lo
back at our passage and apprecia
where we stand now.

But we're not there yet. Still kic
ing the light out of the grass, st
dodging oaks and hiding behi
their blackness from snipers lying
the roof.

Earl says, "The light ain't goi
shoot you."

"If they see us, though."

"You keep staying in the sa
place, you got your own problem
I'm not waitin." He walks away fr
my crouch, half of h
lit, half in shadow.

We make it to the side of t
house, to the locker room front d
coned under a lamp bright as a p
size firefly.

The locker room's a convert
stable with a handwritten si
above the horse door says
charcoal letters, edges flaking off
you read them. I've been insi
twice. Between it and the house
skinny addition The Help call t
decompression chamber—tuxes a
French maid jump-skirts on a ra
under heat lamps, like they're la
ribs or perishable, like my thi
expensive.

The stable itself is just a w
room and no lockers, splintered p
set in the wall, head hanging
they've been climbed on. Whoev
converted it left the horse partitio
left the hay, added green-yell
hairy new-wood benches that hurt
seven.

When we walk past, Earl spits
the door.

Almost at the kitchen no
Where the woods start is a dead
bricked with two rottweile

upped to it. The right one's got a
nd you'd have to own a T-top to
le in the car, calm and staring
worst kind—when they snap
y never miss, and you don't get
, you lose a limb. The left dog
ffs weed clumps, tests the end of
leather leash. He hops around,
nks about standing, waves his
sheathed pink, and wanders to-
rd the dark behind the shed. A
se in the lawn, splayed as lost in-
tines.

Carrie and a black guy share Chi-
se from a carton on the kitchen
k steps. She's got noodles strung
m her teeth to her chopsticks.
e brother's eyes the color of dead
stand.

"That's Vince," Earl whispers.
ep a hand on your wallet."

"I thought he was your brother."

"*Step*brother," Earl says. "I mean,
s a brother. Just not mine."

Vince the dishwasher's got circu-
, scars sliding across his face like
heone got him with an apple corer
a car lighter. He shakes my hand,
oking away like he's taking a bribe
in like a burlap sack. Carrie smiles
h a greasy mouth, says, "Oh my
d, I forgot your drinks." She and
nce pass their own joint. "I'd of-
," she says. "But he gave it to me."
e points at Vince and disappears
the kitchen with a hit in her
oat.

Vince smokes, points at Earl.

Earl points at me, says, "I guess I
ly had three in my helmet."

Vince says, "Want some? It's
d." He holds out the carton—a
tted puddle of brown-green noo-
s and nearly colorless vegetables.
pulls it away before anyone an-
ers.

She comes back with two drinks
d as apple juice, hands them off
e grenades with the pins pulled,
ir tops spilling in the dirt.

Earl holds his up to the light.
"Here's the cranberry?"

"In the kitchen," she says.

Vince makes a thick wet noise
h the lo mein. Bugs knock a com-
on the lamp. The trees throw
d around in their dresses. Be-
een us, smoke the only thing
aking.

The quick things happen like this:
You stand there, wondering could you fit inside a Chinese carton with the sides greased enough, watching the weeds celebrate at the front of a dust-smothered shed. The waitress grabs your hand and squints up at you as if it means something. The brothers start up; spit on each other during words, clash teeth, rip their own lips off, furious about pro city teams you're almost sure you've heard of.

They've chosen sides, and in among the vague you worry you'll root wrong. You look at her. She still squints, you might even call it a smile, her eyes on a train track or a dust storm coming, or wind, or distance—all of it, and her warmth along your arm with the confidence of weather, and she smiles like the right direction.

Carrie drags me willing into the woods, back where it's blackest. Or not that dark but at least where the house light runs out of breath and lays fingers on the last leaf it can touch. The deer find a darkness even farther, still signaling with their pairs of lamps. They stand stock-solid with the weight of nothing to do, like watching from an attic crack while people rob your house.

Carrie kicks leaves away in a narrow square, long as a grave. "Don't you hate my father?" she says. "The way he treats you? The ski mask? I mean, don't you hate that?"

"I know I don't like the way he looks at me."

"No. Do you HATE it?"

"Like he runs a zoo and fucks all the animals."

She says, "I'd hate it."

I sit on a tree stump wide enough to cork a reactor. "I guess you could say I DO, in fact, hate him."

"I mean, what do you get out of dressing like a horse-riding midget?" she says.

"I didn't dress like this. They made me."

Everything runs beneath me like the next square of film, my heels catching in the roots of the escalator. I watch Carrie's face turn, into what or where I can't tell.

"And what's he pay you?" she says. "A hackeysack an hour? Please." She

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[illegible] low and plit in half [illegible] mally I use the word "hate" [illegible] ne such sentences to convince her. She relaxes. She sits on the [illegible] stump in repose—he must practice at [illegible] home. Like she wants me to take [illegible] n sculpt her, tell her to love [illegible] more. She lurches forward and [illegible] ty with spit like I was "I [illegible] never knew you," she moans [illegible] the breath in my face.

[illegible] people who don't know each [illegible] ers are always [illegible] everything.

She looks back at me, around me. [illegible] don't know my head had that [illegible] ories. When I find her eyes, they won't both work without the [illegible] ght one finds him, the other's glare makes my brain hurt.

[illegible] ginnie." She thinks I'm smiling and kisses me worse than ever. Spit [illegible] ds. We suck each other's clothes like husks.

She [illegible] across the mossy [illegible] the tree stump. She writhes in sub- [illegible] ght [illegible] ion and bend- ing in places I never knew possible. Her [illegible] the mail off her back parading against my fingers. The [illegible] her cold like. She smells [illegible] like burning wood, like [illegible] candles.

The deer leave. Trees inch away, [illegible] pull up the [illegible] shoned and scatter- ing, plugging vomit with branches. In the noise of us, in the smell of [illegible] we create, the mud around us [illegible] fills with water from underneath, [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] tongues mixing like viscera, when [illegible] [illegible] "HELP!" and [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Eatsby call her from the steps behind [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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LETTERS

Continued from page 5

[illegible] any change of attitude.) "Censors[hip] is to art as lynching is to justice, [illegible] it's just as disgusting when Blacks [illegible] it as whites."

William Styron
Roxbury, Conn.

Love, Honor, and Betray

Jane Smiley's essay, "Why M[illegible] riage? Matrimony at the Millenni[illegible] Offers Solace to Capitalism" [June] [illegible] both thought-provoking and woefu[illegible] reminiscent of sentimental Hol[illegible] wood family movies. Like the lat[illegible] (and similar to nineteenth-cent[illegible] domestic novels), Smiley prese[illegible] marriage as a quiet island in the mi[illegible] of the howling storm of capitalism[illegible] haven that eventually radiates [illegible] peace and harmony to [illegible] society at large. "The social reden[illegible] tion of marriage in our time," [illegible] writes, "is precisely in intimacy a [illegible] countervailing force against t[illegible] chaotic isolation promoted by fr[illegible] market capitalism." But what mak[illegible] her think that individuals will enga[illegible] in radically different ways of behav[illegible] inside the family than they do ou[illegible] side—that they can be trusting, sh[illegible] ing, and sensitive within marria[illegible] while remaining ruthless, grasp[illegible] and greedy in the market? The r[illegible] roads free-market capitalism has [illegible] ready made into relationships, inroa[illegible] Smiley chronicles in her essay, sh[illegible] that the public/private dichoto[illegible] Smiley both implicitly questions a[illegible] then re-establishes does not exist. [illegible] we want better, more giving a[illegible] trusting relationships on a societ[illegible] scale, then we must also want a m[illegible] equitable society, and a more equ[illegible] table market, built on values that e[illegible] phasize giving and sharing. Smile[illegible] "sharing" relationships will, with f[illegible] exceptions, remain a pipe dream [illegible] long as we continue down the path [illegible] no-holds-barred consumerism and a[illegible] more enamored with the stock ma[illegible] ket and ourselves than with th[illegible] people around us.

Martin Japtok
Charleston, W.Va.

ane Smiley's failure to make ex- t what she means by the "para- m of marriage" leads her into y thinking about the institution ulged in by so many as we enter new millennium.

Because a single word, "marriage," dles together both a specific deno- tion (i.e., a legal contract) and a ole array of connotations (e.g., fi- ity, lifelong commitment, eco- nic interdependence, shared domi- , religious tradition), it is difficult ecognize that except in the strictly l sense marriage is not an all-or- hing condition. My boyfriend and e not legally married, yet we share home, honor each other's families, faithful to each other, plan to stay ether, blend some of our financial sources, and feel a deep spiritual nection. We may even have a mmitment ceremony. Are we less arried" than the couple with two ldren who had a church wedding are not faithful to each other, fight over money and hate each her's families? Yet our society's lan- ge asserts that this couple are "re- y" married and my boyfriend and I not.

What marriage sorely needs is a roughgoing deconstruction, with e creation of new language. Per- ps then we can recognize that arriage" is not one paradigm but eral.

nne L. Saunders
dia, Pa.

Smiley's hackneyed telling of al- native ways to define "love" and me" goes over ground that has n explored and examined count- s times before, usually to the ne numb result. Although I and ny others yearn for some unde- ed utopia away from the stain of talism, it seems apparent that h a state can only be achieved ough a lack of adherence to pre- ous definitions and not through a s (and pseudo-earnest) redefini- of terms, a practice Smiley ap- rs to revel in, as evidenced in essay "Say It Ain't So, Huck" nuary 1996] and much of her fic- n. While amendments are often asing, true change is achieved only through the shattering of entirely new constitutions.

My longtime girlfriend and I, viewing marriage as a symbolic pro- tonnine not unlike that of capital- sm, do not plan to marry. We feel that, for us, the best relationship is one involving another woman, a three-way covenant sanctioned only by ourselves and not by the state, or- ganized religion, or the voodoo doc- tors of economics.

Alan Black
Chicago

Blood Offerings

Mark Slouka's essay ["Blood on the Tracks," June], in which he searches for a meaning behind the death of Ju- lia Toledo and her children, takes a cheap shot at what he refers to as "the efficacy of answers essentially un- changed since Augustine." Offering us, in the end, a choice between "a bloodier God or a truer silence," Slouka offers us nothing new at all. As to whether faith in God, such as that held by Augustine or Jonathan Edwards, can adequately address the problem of "actual blood" with "context, history," Slouka might con- sider that the entirety of the gospel that Julia Toledo embraced is the sto- ry of a man who died a horrible death, who asked the same question Slouka is asking ("My God, why have you forsaken me?"), and who yet pointed to a greater hope ("Into your hands I commit my spirit").

Rev. Craig A. Gross
First Baptist Church
Hamilton, N.Y.

"Blood on the Tracks" is a return to the Old One, that which existed before the distortions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. A return to lucid, muscular prose, made eloquent by compression, one of the great virtues, a better rebuke to the moral atheists who preach the inevitable death of written

Those who acknowledge the de- sign of the Universe, its unprecedented faithful laws, are forced to look past the traditional conception of God, that personal God of infinite love, mercy, and power. The long history

[illegible] offerings that caused [illegible] to crumble. Another of the innocents, demands it.

[illegible] exile by its principle sins, a belief in [illegible] today's [illegible] and today, when [illegible] believe in God, I answer, no. I believe in some- thing much bigger.

Lisa Sproul
Olympia, Wash.

Over My Dead Body

Thomas Lynch's perfumed, florid prose serves the same purpose as graveside roses—to mask an un- pleasant smell. Since few people be- [illegible] Jessica Mitford seem willing to make the point, here it is again: funerals are a waste of money, coffins a waste of wood, headstones a waste of granite, and graveyards a waste of land.

[illegible] to find a more wasteful pro- [illegible] funeral directing, one must turn to astrology, war profit- eering, or the clergy—three other ancient ways of turning human fear and ignorance into cash.

When I die, harvest my organs, sell my gold fillings, burn me or [illegible] throw a party at which people say a lot of nice things about me. If nothing short of a large cash outlay will assuage your guilt [illegible] tell you treated me while alive, give it to one anoth- [illegible] But cremation!

[illegible]

[illegible] Lynch's defense of the fu- neral industry's prices rings a little [illegible] he calculates the cost on his $3,000 "services" and $2,000 [illegible] he takes $1,000 (5 percent) [illegible] to right at the top of the scale. It probably [illegible] two to four hours to prepare the body. A very long wake and funeral would in- [illegible] people [illegible] eight hours at [illegible] hours [illegible] sixteen man-hours), three to five people for a two- [illegible] one hour drive to and

little enterprise.

[illegible]
Bristol, Me.

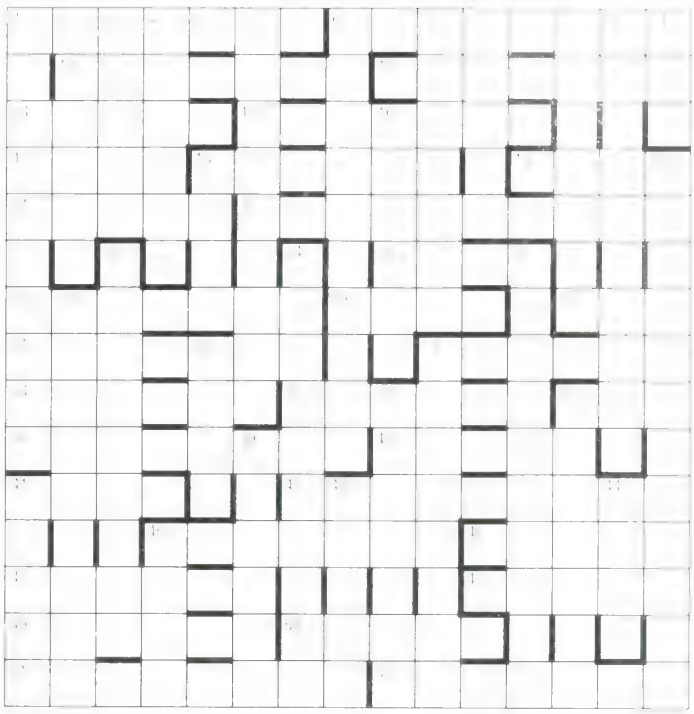
Mistaking Claims

In "Our Expedition Map" (June 2000), Annie Proulx states that "the independent pioneer is part of the myth of the American West" and that the U.S. government "greased the pioneer's skids with . . . protective [illegible]."

To those of Homestead Act claims, the term "homesteaders" certainly opened up for homesteaders, [illegible] they were [illegible] that they [illegible] the land. The pioneer [illegible] but not that their name [illegible] and protective [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Protection Racket

By Richard E. Matthews Jr.



Eight Across answers relate to the contents of a medicine cabinet. Other answers and unclued squares are related to them.

Clued answers include several proper names. Send your completed puzzle entry to the address listed in the solution to last month's puzzle, which appears on page 66.

Across

6. Batter hung up about legroom at movie (5)
12. It could be quite ticket-worthy when used in an organ (7)
14. Eric Ameche pelted with eggs (8)
18. Put up a porch that's knocked down (6)
19. Worldwide carrier? Not a too bad (4)
21. Cold chops right out of cloth-topped pen (5)
22. Upset socialist blames all out-of-date (4)
23. As Robert Frost in Lincoln, Annie's mother often is (but doesn't excel) (4)
29. Very small, but that thing is a fork (4)
30. Our uncle's counselor (5)
31. Entrance with what Mozart's minuet is twice-over, love? (7)
33. As to long-eared "chop-chop" (not my specialty) (6)
34. Old new-wave music lick hit me hard in a certain way (6)
35. Pig talker can make other words out (6)
37. Hunk-wit with gold (5)
38. New stunts with offensive substances left out (5)
40. Emmie wraps time in a pert stone (5)
41. Listen to "Barcim, big-ear" (4)
42. Contaminated chicken-seed loss (9)
45. This is not kosher, or can be eaten Mitchum (7)
48. Finds out spy scene make limit-ed (5)
49. Is person going to court's metric able put out? (6)
52. Fix fuchsia in to remove process (5)
54. People who make waves slump in old boxes (6)

Down

1. *(see 15 Across)*
2. Over a lake there's a 2000 lb. grating (6)
3. Turn on letter to 28-Across, not my ex-in-law (5)
4. Smart like Einstein's theory, or not (8)
5. *(see 40 Across)*
6. *(see 27 Across)*
7. Groom's choice needing extra Aqua Velva (4)
8. Pass the beer for cut-rate clothes type (6)
9. *(see 52 Across)*
10. Bulk not lost across a rocker (6)
11. Out letter in Bill Hart (5)
16. Shoe store stall need for going fast (6)
18. Dam rock and all swing lower (8)
20. *(see 12 Across)*
25. *(see 1 Across)*
24. First person tendering stocks' plastic component (10)
26. *(see 47 Across)*
28. Universe strange to author Walter cancels out the essence (9)
32. "Turn Lung out" in this style (4,4)
33. Wrong clouds cause most fuchsia (5)
36. Small reason (7)
37. Egg-head in pyramid not counted by pro (6)
39. *(see 56 Across)*
43. Feeding for preserving queen's finery (6)
45. Insurance for a bee (5)
44. Dessert delight, and idea (5)
46. Small fish that's all but a mouthful (4)

Contest Rules: [illegible]

MAP

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HARPER'S



A CITIZEN IN FULL

Ralph Nader Campaigns for President with a Course in Civics

By Lewis H. Lapham

◆

PICTURES AT AN EXTERMINATION

A Child of Hollywood Encounters Auschwitz, and Himself

By Leslie Epstein

ESCANABA'S MAGIC HOUR

Movies, Robot Deer, and the American Small Town

By Tom Bissell

IT COUNTS AS SEEING

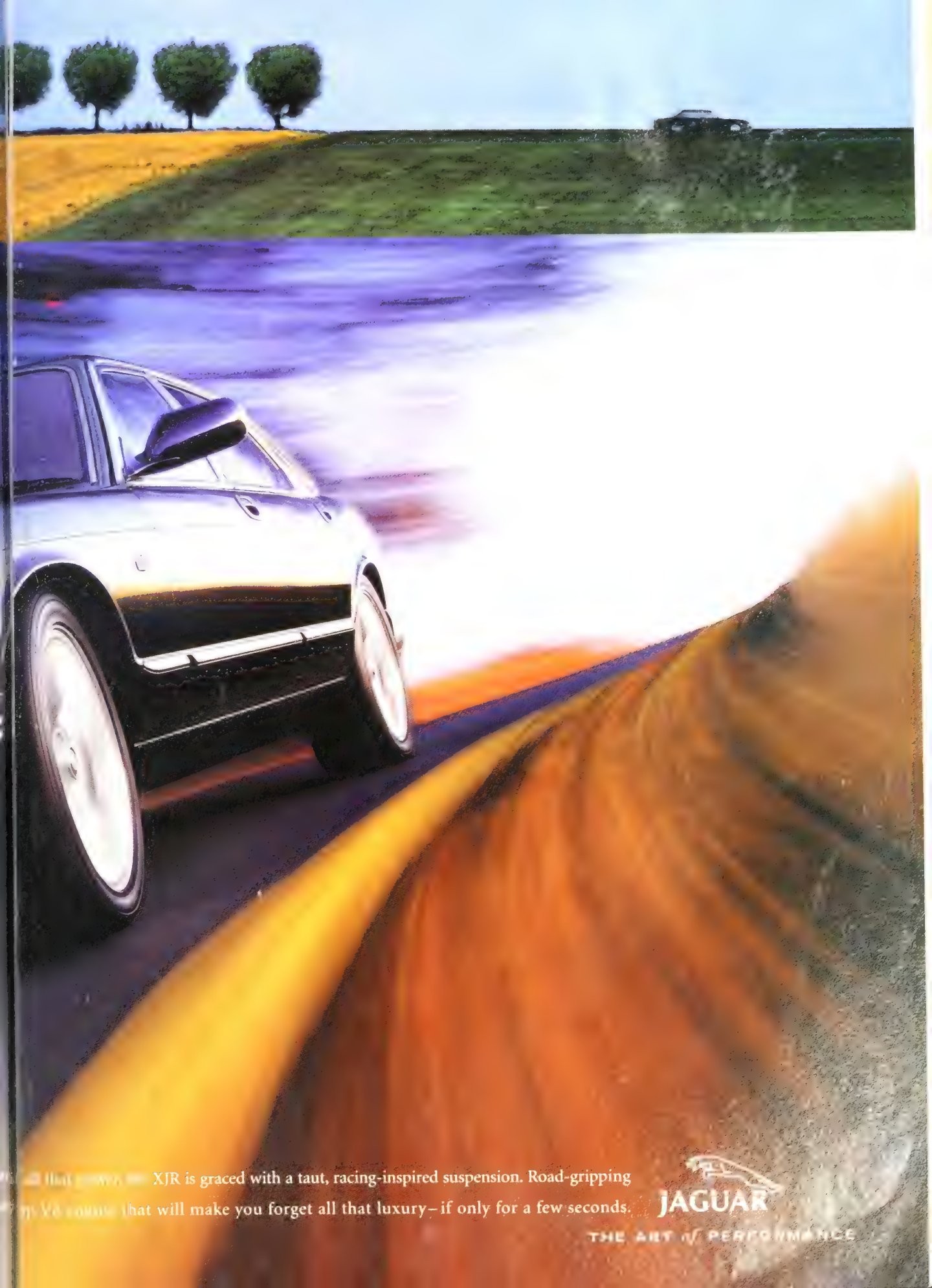
A story by David Means

Also: Anthony Walton and Lydia Davis

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HARPER'S

LETTERS

The Valley and the Shadow

As a report on the culture of Silicon Valley, Dennis Cass's snide and derisive article ["Let's Go: Silicon Valley," July] was perplexing. Did Cass just fail to learn anything or connect with anyone? And what of *Harper's Magazine*? Is your readership so threatened by, or detached from, technology that a sneer substitutes for a thoughtful account of the designers and implementers of our networked world?

I happen to know some of the people interviewed in Cass's piece. He somehow missed the remarkable insight, vision, and ordinary niceness that his quite extraordinary subjects [illegible] after.

Really, your readers should know that Silicon Valley offers a wealth of great stories for their edification and delight. Now and then a magazine of *Harper's* skill captures some of the vibe. [illegible] this time the reporter's attitude got in the way.

[illegible]
Xerox PARC
Palo Alto, Calif.

As one of the walk-on (though in my case, named) players in Dennis [illegible] Silicon Valley, I find [illegible] sounds about his essay. As a friend at another Silicon Valley research laboratory noted, it's bad jour-

[illegible] *Harper's* [illegible] New York, NY.

nalism. But we also agreed that th Valley is a place that invites bad jou nalism.

Okay, I'll admit that I'm annoye that Cass misrepresented me as a "lai back Californian" (I'm actually a Ne York Jew), and that he claims not have seen any books at Xerox PAR until he got to David Hecht's office my office walls, and those of all of th colleagues around me, were lined wi books. But I wasn't surprised. Talkin with journalists is not an infreque experience for people at PARC though, as Cass's article suggests, can be a singularly unrewarding on

One reading of Cass's article cou go as follows: Journalist goes to Silic Valley to hear high-tech scientists a engineers tell him the inside story their everyday lives, and instead or P.R. people will talk to him. He gets ally cranky and spins the resulting gnettes into a tale of repression a paranoia. End of story. An alternati Journalist goes to Silicon Valley write yet another story about hig tech scientists and engineers. Becau places like the ones he visits are sieged by tourists, they hire P.R. peo to screen requests and make sure vi tors don't drive the researchers cra Cass hasn't managed to convince a one that he's different or seri enough to spend time on.

Cass is right about a few thin People in the Valley do take the selves way too seriously; they are closed in their own little worlds of c porate secrecy, stock options (t fountain at PARC does exist and c tainly deserves to be ridiculed!), a generally excessive amounts of mon

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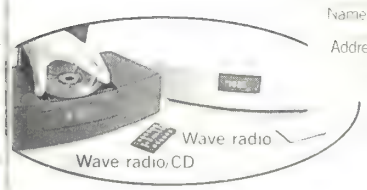
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[illegible] What's [illegible] Silicon Valley, behind the [illegible] what we'd like to [illegible] Unfortunately, that story is not to be told.

[illegible]
Toronto

Dennis Cass's mission may have been to [illegible] "techno-fucked-[illegible]" in lieu of her natural habitat. But we learned more about the corporate culture of secrecy and the pervasive use of disposable blacks than we did about techies. Pity, because it would be [illegible] to read [illegible] people who create the technological environments in which we live, work, travel, and play. You know, those techno-fixes that alienate us from our work and from one another, that suck up our discretionary incomes and thus our freedom, that waste our time and thus our lives. Who are these people? What motivates them? What are their values? Do they understand the impact of their hardware and software [illegible]? Do they care? All questions left unanswered by Cass's [illegible] hand-[illegible] investigation.

[illegible]
Arlington, Va.

Imagine that you're a slightly socially retarded but brilliant engineer [illegible] Stanford [illegible] and [illegible] you're employed by a [illegible] you're paid to [illegible] people to [illegible] Silicon Valley and tell [illegible] [illegible] especially enjoy working for. I'm surprised [illegible] Silicon Valley [illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

Dry Mouths

Dennis Cass's article on Silicon Valley and Jacques Leslie's on freshwater depletion ["Running Dry," July] are linked by the fact that the production of a single six-inch silicon wafer for a semiconductor requires 2,275 gallons of de-ionized water. In addition to the problem of freshwater depletion by computer manufacturers, toxic pollution is widespread in Silicon Valley's Santa Clara County. This county contains numerous sites of groundwater contamination and more Superfund sites (twenty-nine) than any other county in the United States. Companies such as Intel, IBM, Hewlett-Packard, Siemens, Advanced Micro Devices, and Fairchild Semiconductor bear some responsibility. These issues have been ignored by the Internet-obsessed mass media, but readers can learn about them through the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition in San Jose (www.svtc.org).

Joan Gregg
East Orange, N.J.

Many thanks for Jacques Leslie's deeply informative article. It should be the sermon at every church, synagogue, mosque, and temple, to alert as many people as possible to our plight. It boils down to the fact that 97 percent of the water on earth is salt water, and of the 3 percent left, 2 percent is frozen. In short, we depend on 1 percent of this planet's water to survive, and we had better take care of that tiny percentage. Leslie's piece should be mandatory reading in every household.

I. A. Von D. Brilhart
Toledo, Ohio

For at least two hundred years pessimists have been warning us about overpopulation and the depletion of resources. Yet today nearly every resource and commodity is more abundant, not more scarce, cheaper, than it was two hundred years ago. The trouble is, pessimists extrapolate human demand without extrapolating technological progress. Two thirds of the Earth's surface is water. How can we ever run out? We just need to find more efficient ways to get the salt and other minerals out. Does anyone doubt that this is possible? The glass of water is half full, not half empty.

Michael Wade
Belleair, Fla.

Jacques Leslie's "Running Dry" is a blatant attempt to bamboozle, not inform. It is true that virtually any irrigation results in runoff water collecting salts from the underlying soils and returning them to the world's oceans. But the same thing occurred before farming, because whenever runoff from rainfall enters the soil it does the same thing. This is partly why the oceans are salty. As for the accelerated evaporation, we call that part of the hydrologic cycle. This cycle involves evaporation of water, transfer aloft in clouds, rainfall, and runoff, followed by evaporation. Water evaporated in northern Arizona makes the air slightly more humid. Water evaporated in the Pacific makes the West Coast of the United States more humid. So what is Leslie so worried about?

Michael Daly
Farmington, N.Mex.

The space wasted by Jacques Leslie in his essay on our planet's impending water shortage would have been better used informing the public that they can have all the water they want easily and, in the long run, cheaply, if they will only abandon their unreasonable fear of nuclear power. One of the prime selling points for nuclear power, some fifty years or so ago, was that the excess heat could be used to purify ocean water for our use. This option was never explored, partly because at the time there was no perceived shortage of water in the United States. Well, the time has come.

Ellis Glazier
Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas
La Paz, Mexico

Jacques Leslie is to be congratulated on his eye-opening article about our planet's rapidly shrinking reserves of freshwater. As the author points out, most of us have no awareness of a water shortage until, literally speaking, our well has run dry—a classic example of "out of sight, out of mind."

In Florida, which has (or, more co

tly, had) one of the largest aquifers the United States, salt water had lready penetrated the aquifer two iles inland as early as fifteen years go, when my condo association de ided to install a hydro-thermal heat g system for our swimming pool. But is rapid depletion of a seemingly in haustible freshwater supply is hard surprising in view of the fact that the ate's population has quadrupled in e past fifty years and the Earth's pop ation more than doubled in the same ophysical blink of an eye. Florida's rrent population of about 15 mil on consumes an amazing 138 million llons per capita per day, an extrav ance that must soon come to a halt, ne way or the other.

Although there can be no question the need for conserving our dimin ing freshwater reserves, as persua ely argued in Leslie's article, it is ually imperative that we take prompt d decisive action to curb the popu ion explosion, which threatens to haust not only our water supply but l our finite resources, long before rld population reaches the U.N.'s ojected—but highly improbable ure of 9 billion. The inescapable al rnative to taking such voluntary ac on will be a natural catastrophe of pocalyptic proportions.

ard E. Binney-Norberg
ptimum Population Trust
nia Beach, Fla.

Jacques Leslie's "Running Dry" was ght on target. Who can fail to see at any solution to our present water sis must involve halting population owth? This was clear to the authors the Nixon and Ford administrations' tional Security Study Memorandum 0 report, which was stamped "clas ied" and deep-sixed for seventeen ars, and in the Program for Action, pported by the Clinton Administra on, in Cairo. Yet as recently as the ijing-Plus-Five meeting in New York June, the Holy See, Poland, icaragua, and conservative Islamic vernments were still working hard block serious efforts to deal with erpopulation, including giving wom the right to control their own fer ity. Until the nations of the world n come together in recognizing the role played by overpopulation in so many of the problems facing us, these problems will continue to get worse.

Edd Doerr
Executive Director
Americans for Religious Liberty
Silver Spring, Md.

Map Gap

So, you've finally cracked it. Your map ["The Gun Gap," July] solves—with a single paragraph of text and a rather confusing graphic in the shape of the fifty states—the raging debate over the effectiveness of gun control law. "Perhaps not surprisingly, the best predictors of gun deaths are poverty and low education levels, correlations that suggest gun control laws is likely to [be] more," you trumpet with finality. The National Rifle Association will no doubt be pleased the controversy has ended once and for all.

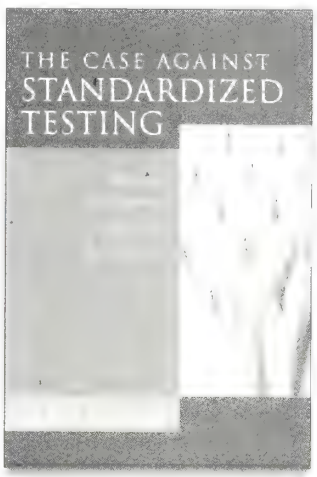
The NRA, however, has pointed out a problem with this assertion that your helpful map does not—namely, the 200 million guns already in the

Continued on page 80

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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of incumbent vice presidents elected to the presidency between [illegible]: 1

Number of incumbent Republican governors who have won the presidency since 1[illegible]: 1

Year in which Mikhail Gorbachev told Ronald Reagan, "I think you're wasting your money" on Star Wars: 1987

Cost to produce Safeguard, the only U.S. ground-based long-range missile shield ever deployed: $23,500,000,000

Number of days in the 1970s that the system was operational before it was abandoned as needless: 180

Number of years of planning and construction devoted to France's Maginot Line fortifications in World War II: 15

Number of days it took the German army to maneuver around them and invade France: 3

Number of troops Italy mistakenly sent to Kristianstad, Sweden, last May instead of Kristiansand, Norway: 116

Rank of France, Italy, and Germany, respectively, among countries with the best overall health-care systems: 1, 2, 25

Percentage of newborns in India who would qualify for intensive care if they were born in California: 30

Percentage by which the cancer death rate in the area around Sydney's Olympic Village exceeds the rest of the city's: 8.5

Factor by which dioxin levels detected around the Village site during construction exceeded EPA guidelines: 1,540

Pounds of fuel required to maintain this year's 11,500 Olympic torches: 2,029

Ratio of the amount of energy generated by 1 gallon of ethanol to the amount of energy required to produce it: 1.[illegible]

Number of Chevron oil tankers named after Condoleeza Rice, George W. Bush's foreign-policy adviser: 1

Number of times Maureen Dowd's *New York Times* column has likened a male political candidate's style to Dickens: 3

Length, in pages, of Al Gore's 1969 Harvard thesis on the impact of TV "on the conduct of the Presidency": 1[illegible]

Percentage change since 1991 in the size of the network TV audience: −24

Percentage change since then in TV networks' combined annual ad revenue: +46

Ratio of Motorola's commercial sales in China last year to the value of its U.S. defense contracts: 3:1

Ratio of Lockheed Martin's 1999 sales to the $13 million fine it will pay for giving secret technology to China: 1,962:1

Days after the Koreas' rapprochement last June that the U.S. replaced the term "rogue states" with "states of concern": 4

Estimated number of people who live in a "state of concern": 180,000,000

Date by which the Palestinian Authority announced last summer that a Palestinian state would be established: 9[illegible]

Percentage of Palestinians who said at the time that they believed this would occur: 38

Estimated percentage of Ugandan voters who support postponing a multiparty political system: 80

Number of national and independent armies fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: 12

Chance that a 15-year-old African boy will die of AIDS: 1 in 2

Percentage change since 1990 in the number of deaths from accidental poisoning among elderly Americans: −10

Percentage change since then in the number of such deaths among Americans between the ages of 45 and 64: +18[illegible]

Number of the three cancer survivors on the Supreme Court who are also over 70: 2

Percentage of death-penalty trials since 1976 that appeals courts have found to include "serious, reversible error": 68

Chance that a government execution since 1976 was performed in Texas: 1 in 3

Percentage of Americans who favor repealing the estate tax: 60

Estimated percentage of Americans deceased last year whose estates paid the tax: 2

Factor by which homeowners' deductions claimed by Americans last year exceed the budget of HUD: 3

Estimated portion of U.S. coastal homes whose plots will be obliterated by erosion by the year 2060: 1/4

Average number of new homes built each day in New York's East Hampton last year: 0.93

Ratio of the number of copies of *The Great Gatsby* sold each month in the U.S. to the number sold in the month of December: 3

Amount contributed for a University of Nebraska English chair last June by the founder of CliffsNotes: $25[illegible]

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available. Source: "Harper's Index" [illegible]

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READINGS

[Essay]

A WORLD LIKE SANTA BARBARA

By Dave Hickey, in the Summer issue of Art issues, *published in Los Angeles by the Foundation for Advanced Critical Studies. Hickey teaches art criticism and theory at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His essay "Why Art Should Be Bad" appeared in the January 1998 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

I have been thinking a lot lately about what art does in our civilization and have come to the conclusion that, at present, it's not doing very much. I find this distressing, because one of the things that art can do and that urgently needs doing—one of the things that art has done in the past and does no longer—is to civilize us a little. It's somewhat surprising, of course, when one considers the wars, battles, massacres, murders, and banishments that characterized the quarrel over images from the Age of Constantine up through the Reformation, that the discourse surrounding works of art in modern times should be characterized by its civility, but, with certain glaring exceptions, it has been, and there are good reasons for this being so.

The primary reason for this civility is that human civilization, in the process of becoming less centralized and less authoritarian, has created modes of expression in which the burden of assigning meaning and value resides wholly within the colloquy of beholders. Objects and events that were once instruments of meaning and value have become sites for adjudicating meaning and value; icons have become art, rituals have become dances; history has bred fiction; and clothing, fashion. So, today, we all acknowledge that when we argue about art we are arguing about the use, value, and meaning of objects that have no use, value, and meaning beyond those we attribute to them. Moreover, as long as we are discussing the consequences of our transactions with works of art among peers, issues of institutional, scientific, and academic authority are moot, and even our personal disagreements are directed nonconfrontationally toward objects in the world.

These factors are calming, I think, and they explain why art critics disagree so happily while bureaucrats, scientists, and academics quarrel so acrimoniously. Art critics quarrel about perceived value and the ethics of one's relationship to objects in the world. Bureaucrats, scientists, and academics argue about the construction of truth, power, and authority, and this, of course, would seem to be the more urgent discourse. It would be, too, except for the fact that, in nontotalitarian societies, truth, power, and authority are dependent upon the value attributed to them by the populace. In such societies, the discourse of art is the civil site upon which we freely expand and refine our language of perceived value—because, for all the anxiety and disorientation our transactions with works of art entail, nobody gets killed as a consequence of them anymore. Very

THE TRAGIC KINGDOM

n G-Rated Animated Films," a
the March 24 Journal of the American Medical Association. *The authors* *Health*

2 injuries, 1 fatality

3 injuries, 1 fatality

weapons used: body, sword, magic, other

Pan (1953)
2 injuries, 1 fatality
eapons used: body, sword, gun, explosive, other

3 injuries, 1 fatality
ly, sword, gun, other

weapons used: body, sword, magic, other

Dwarfs (1937)
2 injuries, 1 fatality

(1986)

gun, magic, other

9 injuries, 2 fatalities

few even go to jail, and that is just the point: art is a safe place where we may nonviolently connect ourselves with its meaning situations and adjudicate their public and private relevance in public discourse.

We can do this because works of art have only as much power as we attribute to them by our free response. The habit of responding freely, however, and of tolerating the anxiety these responses generate, is a learned activity. If we cannot learn to volunteer our free responses—or if we are taught not to respond (as we are taught today)—the live discourse about art is over, and what Susan Sontag calls the "erotics" of art has been wholly supplanted by the language of bureaucratic explanation.

Our responsiveness, then, is the primary signifier of a civilized transaction with the world that, at its most refined, sophisticates us and facilitates social change without revolutionary violence or authoritarian edict. Unfortunately, the right wing of American culture harbors a deep distrust of this sophistication. It doesn't think we can be civilized, except through authoritarian police control; it presumes, further, that any disorienting challenge of the sort that works of art issue is a direct incitement to civil unrest. The American left wing distrusts this same sophistication, because this faction doesn't really want us civilized. It wishes to retain the option of revolutionary violence in the furtherance of a "culture war," and consequently retains its warlike rhetoric, disdaining any inference of art's civilizing mediation. The left wing suspects that art is opium; the right suspects that it's PCP. Neither recognizes art as the conventional, civilized forum that it is. Failing to recognize this, they assume that ordinary citizens are not cognizant of its conventional nature either, and thus cannot be trusted to distinguish artifice from actuality, words from deeds, signs from referents, narratives from actions.

This is elitist balderdash, of course, yet for the past thirty years the left and right wings of American culture have urgently conspired to mitigate art's ability to civilize us by striving to "civilize" art itself. They have conspired to limit our freedom to construct new meanings and values for works of art: the right wing by seeking to censor any art that might generate healthy anxiety; the left by explaining away art's ability to challenge us individually, by presenting art to us in perfectly controlled, explained, and contextualized packages.

The consequence of this conspiracy has been the authoritarian and therapeutic pollution of art's last free public habitat. Thus, at present, American cultural institutions routinely embody both factions' prejudice against art's contingency and embrace their mutual distrust of



Cover, by Lucian Freud. Reproduced by Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence.

unadministered artistic experience. In public galleries, labeled from PG to X like cable-television movies, unoffending works of art are stranded in fields of explanatory press-type, like ornaments in a medieval breviary. The wild domain of freedom and imagination—of new meaning and eccentric value—that a gallery full of unadorned objects and images would otherwise generate is now rigorously domesticated. Its effects are distanced and irrevocably muffled, and all on the mad presumption that a literate populace, which is perfectly capable of participating in the knowing carnage of *Scream 2* without henceforth running amok, is somehow incapable of dealing imaginatively with the anxiety of Fragonard without "edu-speak" wall texts and signage denoting ad hoc parental guidance.

Thus we have reached a point at which members of the literate populace have a right to ask just what kind of a world they are being asked to inhabit. As a lone member of that literate populace, I am more concerned than most, since I have seen that ideal world, and I do not like it.

A few years ago, I was privileged to teach a group of splendid students at the University of California at Santa Barbara. In order to do so, I had to fly in and out of that coastal paradise on a weekly basis, and, as pleasant as my class was and as beautiful as the setting is, I found the community of Santa Barbara troubling in its perfect contentment and uncanny coherence. Contentment is always annoying, of course, but the coherence was confusing in

the extreme, since the community itself, in its ordinary constituents, seemed anything but.

For there I was, in a small city populated by petit bourgeois right-wing Protestants, woozy New Age gurus, hard-core libertarian ranchers, over-groomed hacienda patricians, scruffy surfer hippies, retired art dealers and policemen, well-patronized psychoanalysts, psychologists, group therapists, and self-helpers, academic liberals, assorted movie stars, and tenured Marxists, all living happily together, dining out and placidly shopping, in a smoke-free, herbivorous, puritan utopia. My confusion was exacerbated by the fact that I did not cohere at all. My clothes were wrong, my hours irregular, my habits unhealthy, and my talk too ebullient and abrasive. For me, it was a hellish paradise. So it is to be vexed by that I didn't tread on some invisible trace or bump into some invisible vitrine, jostling the invisible *objets* within. Every time this happened, I asked myself: What does this culturally and ideologically disparate group of Americans have in common that I do not have in common with them?

In the third week of my stay, I figured it out. All these people, the Baptists, Marxists, patricians, gurus, surfers, celebrities, and shrinks, believed that all of the problems of modern life derive from the anxiety of commercial society and that the goal of any enlightened community should be the alleviation of that anxiety through the ministrations of an enlightened elite.

In a world like this, I realized (and not without trepidation), art and society as I understood them simply could not exist. I understood art to be a necessary accoutrement of urban life, a democratic social field of sublimated anxiety and a forum of contentious civility. I assumed that free citizens cultivated their responsiveness to works of art in order to mitigate their narcissism and fuel their imaginative grasp of that which is irrevocably beyond themselves, to transform their anxious discomfort at not-knowing into a kind of vertiginous pleasure.

In Santa Barbara, such adaptive behavior was unnecessary. Everything was regulated and explained. Urbanity, anxiety, otherness, contention, loud colors, and bright talk were wholly absent. Even shopping (that quintessential urban activity) was conducted as a form of relentless grazing administered by tastefully regulated signage. Antique agrarian values had [illegible] in this [illegible] Santa Barbara notwithstanding, we live in a cosmopolitan age [illegible]

ability of a diverse populace to tolerate and appreciate the anxiety of living in a tumultuous, heterogeneous urban world. That, for 150 years, Americans left the farm in search of just that heterogeneity and anxiety. That those who were forced to leave the farm found it anyway, because anxiety is the very stuff of urban existence, of living in a world where one's autonomy and identity are compromised by the simple fact that one cannot grow one's own food in a city, or slaughter one's own pig, or weave one's own cloth, or churn one's own butter, and in order to acquire these necessities one must interact in a civil way with commercial culture, with people who are different from oneself, people in trade who are totally unaware of one's own genteel agrarian authenticity.

The world of art and letters is the site upon which we hone these skills, acquire the responsiveness, imagination, and flexibility to deal with this world, where we learn to appreciate its anxieties. Because, to speak plainly, one doesn't really need art on the farm, or in Santa Barbara either, if one is comfy there. One of the great ironies of American history, in fact, is that Thomas Jefferson, who invented the idea of America as a nation of contented farmers, bankrupted himself out of boredom with that life—importing fine art, rare books, exotic objects, elegant furniture, and scientific instruments because he wasn't comfy with the bucolic ennui of life at Monticello. Paris it wasn't, in other words, and although Jefferson never admitted this, I suspect that the putative father of the American suburbs would agree with me that the idea of a life without sophisticated contingency and a culture bowdlerized to alleviate the beholder's anxiety presents a prospect that only a farmer could countenance.

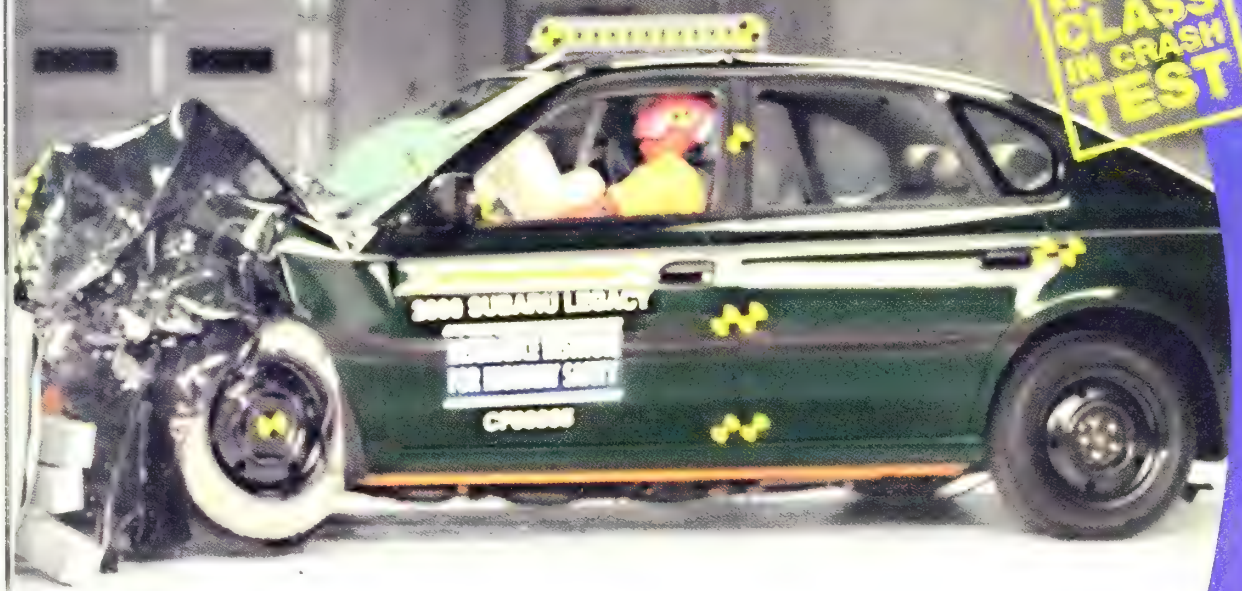
I will go even further, in fact, and suggest that the gradual refarmerization of America explains the current penchant of suburban youth for killing one another in bunches, that these killings are the direct consequence of a culture that proposes the instantaneous alleviation of anxiety as its primary goal—a culture in which weapons are sold, games are designed, and art is explained for no other purpose. Children in the cities kill one another, too, of course, but for explicable reasons like poverty, greed, anger, and ambition, for causes whose consequences can be sublimated into civilized endeavors, that are, in fact, being sublimated as we speak: into music, dance, drama, and fashion. These city kids kill because they want more life. The killer children in the suburbs have no such excuses or ambitions. They're just anxious about being teenagers and don't think they should have to feel that way.

LEGACY

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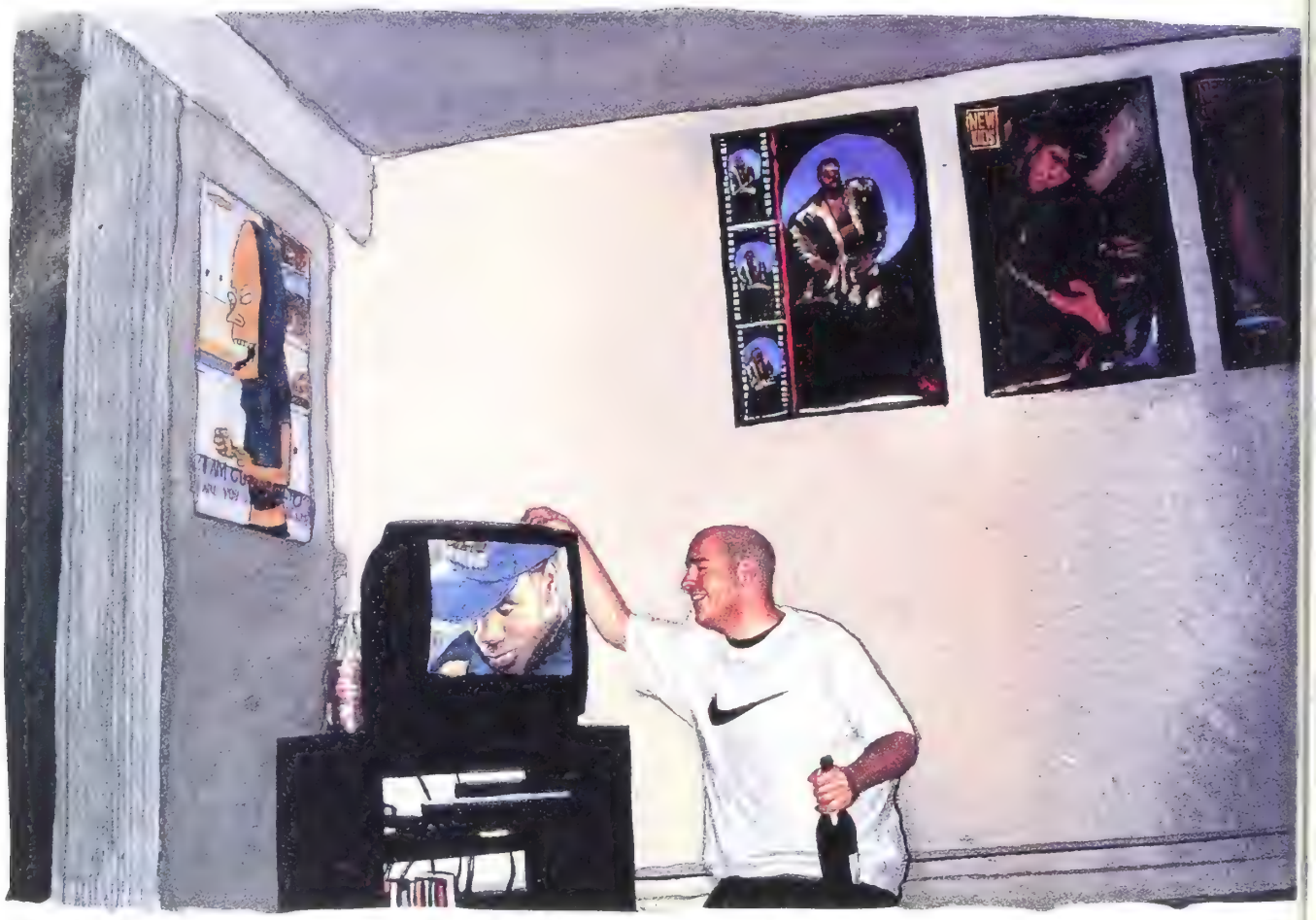
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SUBARU

The Boxer Engine



Untitled, 1993, by Jim Shaw, from the exhibition *Dan Graham's Kaleidoscope Performances: Rock Culture Revisited*, which was on display last spring in the Greater New York exhibit at P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center in Queens.

Some people blame the media. Others blame the schools. Still others blame the breakdown of the family. Some of the younger people blame the killers' parents, and this would be plausible if these children were killing their parents, or assassinating other authority figures, but they're not. Their first option, in fact, is to become their parents, to usurp the authoritarian parental role and obliterate the [illegible] lines [illegible] make them nervous—because they have been so well nurtured, loved, and protected that they have never developed [illegible]. Because they have never [illegible] and consequently [illegible] they can't imagine [illegible] they can't imagine [illegible] they can't even imagine their own futures or the constituents of an ordinary human life. And those who survive are unlikely to acquire this knowledge either, even from [illegible]. Because the consequence of [illegible] acts designed to do nothing more than alleviate anxiety, instantaneously [illegible] the world more like Santa Barbara [illegible] more parental control, more professional explanation, more elite explanation, and more authoritarian censorship.

It will mean fewer works of art, less freedom, and more killings. And all because we wanted to make a safe place. Unfortunately, art is the only safe place, and it is only safe because the world is so [illegible].

[Interview]

SMOKE 'EM IF YOU GOT 'EM

From a conversation posted in June on Open Letters (www.openletters.net), an online magazine. Cheryl Wagner is a New Orleans journalist. Sam and Zak are members of Mysophilia, a death-metal band based in Florida.

CHERYL WAGNER: How old were you when you first started smoking things?

ZAK: I think I smoked reefer before I ever smoked cigarettes. I was probably like ten or eleven years old.

CHERYL: What was the first thing not meant to be smoked that you smoked?

ZAK: When I was around the same age that I smoked reefer, we rolled up pine needles and smoked them.

SAM: I've smoked those things that fall off pine trees that look like little dicks and you can crush them up into an orange powder. I smoked that a long, long time ago.

ZAK: It's like inhaling a forest fire.

CHERYL: Do you usually plan to smoke something in advance, or is it a spur-of-the-moment, "it's here why not smoke it" kind of thing?

ZAK: The first time, I would say, I usually smoke it trying to get high from it and then, like, use that as my judgment of whether smoking works better than the other ways you can do it. Like some drugs, from just hearsay we already knew we couldn't get high from smoking, but we smoked them anyway.

CHERYL: Like what?

ZAK: Like Percocets and prescription drugs that you wouldn't normally even guess to smoke, we would try to smoke.

CHERYL: How come?

SAM: We just have a plethora of drugs to try, and maybe it'll get you more fucked up, like the way you want to be.

CHERYL: How many more items do you think you have smoked than the average person?

ZAK: I would put anyone besides, like, a good drug-dealing one of my friends to the test. I could have outsmoked them by ten. I'd be really surprised if somebody's outsmoked me.

SAM: I think we have probably smoked more shit than most of the people we know.

ZAK: Any drug I've taken, I've smoked also.

CHERYL: Why?

SAM: Just curiosity. Most drugs that you can eat or inject we'll try to see what effect it has, because we want to see if it gets you more fucked up. But a lot of stuff we just smoked because we're curious about it and like to see what it does to you, you know?

[illegible] Where did you get [illegible]?

ZAK: A girl we knew was a friend of [illegible] mom and she stole it [illegible].

[illegible] Had you heard [illegible] to smoke, or did you just think you'd try it?

ZAK: It's an ingredient. Duh!

CHERYL: So what was it like?

SAM: I didn't like it. It made my lips numb. I recall, numb and tingly and made my lungs hurt really bad, and I think when you start smoking a shitload then it just makes you psychotic. I just smoked a load of it and I was like, I can tell this sucks, so I stopped smoking it. But I think it must really warp your mind [illegible] maybe [illegible]. Put it you smoked it only because my friends kept smoking it and they were like, I think it vaped them out.

[illegible] What's smoking PCP like?

ZAK: It's like the whole world is rushing through a straw and you've poked a hole in the side and there's a vacuum [illegible] but it's actually like cycling liquid the whole time, you know, but it's not dripping down and you're in that little [illegible].

[illegible] Is that pervasive [illegible]?

ZAK: I don't know. It depends on your personality.

[illegible] What common household items are best smoked?

ZAK: I've smoked laxatives. There's always some degree of [illegible] most of the cocaine you get because baby laxative is a really good cut.

SAM: It makes you want to shit a lot. You do it and you're like, damn, I have to take a shit really bad.

[illegible] How did you find out about this stuff? Have you tried to make any methamphetamine-like things?

[illegible] I tried to smoke [illegible]. I'm not sure what this stuff's called but it's a menthol-smelling cold sore gel.

CHERYL: Vicks VapoRub?

[illegible] Yeah, it's kind of like that, but it's a lip [illegible]. I cooked the [illegible] crystal on the stove and I smoked the crystals from that.

[illegible] Did it [illegible] anything?

ZAK: Not [illegible]. But it knew there was a consistent household source of getting high I would [illegible].

SAM: But there's not. I think they really think about that.

ZAK: Yeah, they're smart, the people who run the country. They're smarter than to let people have an easily accessible thing to get high on. Whether it hurts you or [illegible] it doesn't, they just don't want you to get high.

[illegible] Or it it makes you even better than you were before.

ZAK: Right. Like if there was something that made you super-smart and super-creative, they probably wouldn't want you to take it.

CHERYL: When did you smoke your skin and why?

SAM: We smoked skin several times.

[illegible] And then one time this girl held a lighter to my hand and I had a huge blister, like that big, because I let her do it for like a minute. Then I popped that and we put the pus onto reefer we were smoking and smoked my pus. And then any good cuts we've had, we've tried to smoke our blood.

CHERYL: Would you smoke each other's skin?

SAM: Sure. I'm sure we'd all smoke each other's skin.

[illegible] And I think we'd all drink each other's pus or blood, too, in, like, a close-knit group of friends. Not just anyone's pus.

SAM: Yeah, but piss is different.

ZAK: Yeah, urine's different.

CHERYL: Why is urine different?

ZAK: I won't drink guy's urine, but I will drink girl's piss.

SAM: Yeah, definitely.

CHERYL: Would you smoke a female's urine?

ZAK: Yeah. I'd smoke guy's urine too.

SAM: I'd rather smoke urine than drink it.

[illegible] If I wanted to smoke, say, my shoe, what might be a good method?

ZAK: I would say to smoke the top parts of it first and probably the bottom last. Or I would maybe even scrape off the stuff on the bottom and smoke that first.

SAM: Yeah.

ZAK: You're more likely to get high off that than the rest of your shoe. You're more likely to get [illegible] something that's somehow poisonous to you to get you high than what they make shoes out of, or people'd be smoking them [illegible].

CHERYL: Have you noticed any negative side effects [illegible] from your years of smoking?

ZAK: I went on a trip last year to Philadelphia and I bought a bunch of I guess PCP and smoked it, and I know that when I came back I wasn't the same person I was when I left. But I think I've pretty much recovered [illegible].

[illegible] I haven't in last [illegible] six months [illegible] I don't [illegible] it, what not.

ZAK: Just everythin[illegible]

SAM: All his thought tracks were changed. I thought he was totally psycho and crazy and would never [illegible] the same room. I was like, bullshit, he's crazy as hell and he doesn't know what he's talking about.

CHERYL: Do you think you've suffered any brain damage from your years of smoking?

ZAK: Of course.

SAM: I'm sure. But I think I've suffered even more from drinking too much alcohol since I was twelve than I have from all the drugs I've smoked.

ZAK: I think in the last year I've suffered more brain damage from hits to my head than from any drug that I've done in my life.

CHERYL: Do you get a lot of hits to your head?

ZAK: Yeah.

CHERYL: How?

ZAK: All sorts of ways. Been in car accidents and fallen out of trees and been punched in the head and slammed my head through doors and walls and stuff.

SAM: Had punching competitions. Like who can punch each other as hard as they can in the head and still like it.

CHERYL: What is the effect of that?

ZAK: It's almost like a hit of nitrous, but it's all natural. Me and my friend Joe have both broken our hands on each other's heads. It's just like burning yourself or whatever. It's just like doing something really nice for someone else and you get a feeling of goodness to yourself.

CHERYL: Is there a place on your head where you prefer to be hit?

SAM: It's usually in the forehead.

ZAK: Anywhere from, like, my temples forward and mid-eyebrows up, but sometimes I like getting punched in the cheekbones really hard.

CHERYL: Is there anything you've smoked that you wish you hadn't? If you could go back and "unsmoke" something, would you?

SAM: No.

[Letter]

DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS

From a series of letters written by Ricardo Castillo Luna to Randall Patterson, staff writer for the Houston Press, *which published them last spring. Luna was released on parole last April after having served nineteen years in prison.*

Sir, I have received your most welcome letter and was glad to know of your interest in me. First of all, I would like to let you know that I'm thirty-nine years old. I was born and raised

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n. [illegible] Texas. I have never been married and have no children.

As to what I crave, I crave freedom. But when I want, shower when I want, an hour, do what I want when I want to. Most of all I crave to be with my family and feel loved by them. Everything went down the hill and down the drain. I know why, and how, and I have no excuse. I don't blame anybody but myself.

As for my early life, my parents taught us good discipline. They supported me when I decided to enter boxing. I was eleven or twelve years old when I went to that night. I lived in a small neighborhood where my brother and I played football with [illegible] in the street.

There was a man in his mid-thirties who we used to call Eddie the Glue. He used to sniff spray paint and would leave socks full of it on the ground. These days (7/4) I only drink beer. Then one day, while having a few beers, a friend saw one of Eddie's socks. A bet started. Everyone would take a big sniff of Eddie's sock. The one who didn't would buy more beer. Well, I didn't have any money, so I took a sniff.

That was it! That's all it took. Next thing I knew, I was hanging around with the big guys, selling dope, doing dope, and sniffing spray paint. I even had a gang, Los Stones. My boxing career ended, and I started stealing cars and shoplifting. My parents tried to stop me, but I wouldn't listen. I didn't care about anything or anyone. I dropped out of high school at the end of ninth grade.

Well, I finally got caught stealing a car. I was sentenced to eight years' probation. Within a year, I violated probation [illegible] times. The judge finally sentenced me to two years in TDC [Texas Department of Criminal Justice], [illegible] June 1979.

From what I've seen, different in those days. There were no recreational [illegible] gangs. We were all crowded in a small dayroom. On one side of the dayroom, all the blacks were together; on the other side, all the Hispanics; and in the middle were the whites. Most of the time that's how we stayed. I lived in cell [illegible]. One man would sleep on the top bunk, one on the bottom bunk, and the other on the floor.

[illegible] for many months, and I don't even remember [illegible]. I hated it. They'd have inmates who only wanted to go to school because they didn't want to work. Early in the morning, [illegible] would go out to the fields. I hated it, especially the officers on horses behind us, cussing us out all day long! It was real hard work, especially during summer. [illegible] Those who did were taken to do fifteen days' [illegible].

I did quite a few days in solitary. Back then, we were not given any clothes or mattresses, only an old blanket with a bunch of holes. Only twice a day were you given a meal, one around five A.M. and the other about six P.M. Each meal had one teaspoon of sauerkraut, and one of spinach and carrots. Every other day you were given a vitamin and a little sponge on a stick to brush your teeth.

I'll never forget once when I did time in solitary for fighting. It was very cold, and the hard steel on the bunk was cold, but it wasn't the cold that got to me. It was Christmas Day. The chapel was right next to the solitary cells. I was staring at the ceiling while I lay on my steel bunk listening to everyone in the chapel singing Christmas carols! I felt so lonely being in solitary, naked and with only a small blanket full of holes.

I was discharged from solitary in November 1980. I had been in TDC for seventeen months twenty-three days out of a two-year sentence. The first thing I did was meet some guy who was released the same day and go buy some liquor and get drunk.

I didn't learn much in TDC but how to fight, be a racist, and work in the fields. In time, I started hanging around my old friends again. One night we went barhopping and got drunk. My friends were beating up on their girlfriends, and that's one thing I hate, a woman-beater! I told my friends to drive me home. Once there, one of my friends started to beat his girl, and I stopped him. The girl ran and got in the car with the other two and drove away. The other guy stayed with me. We were behind my home, arguing in the alley. He pulled out a buck knife and said that he had something to do with my brother's death (my brother had drowned). He punched me and started to swing the knife at me. I started to fight back and ended up taking the knife away from him. I stabbed him four times in the neck, twice in the chest, and once on his knee.

I went inside my home, and I kept thinking that he was going to live and hurt someone in my family. He was the type of guy who would take revenge. So I got a screwdriver, went back, and stabbed him in the forehead twice, to make sure he was dead.

Well, Mr. Patterson, I ended up with a forty-year sentence for murder. You asked me what thoughts I have now regarding the person who is dead. To be honest, I really don't think much about him. He pulled the knife on me, and knowing him, he could have ended up killing me instead. I believe, and will always believe, that it was a fair fight. In a war you live or you die. I prefer to live. Don't get me wrong, I'm no killer. I don't go killing people for the hell of it.



he Sotheby Institution, by Phaidon. Excerpted with permission from the book. Sotheby's is a registered trademark used by Phaidon Press.

When I came back to HDC, things were slowly changing. In solitary confinement I was given all my clothes, a mattress, a blanket, one small pencil, and writing paper. What surprised me most was that I was given three full meals a day! I thought it was some kind of mistake and that someone would come back and take everything away. But they never came. I had heard some inmates complain about how bad solitary was. If they only knew! I myself just kicked back on my bunk with a big smile on my face, smoking a cigarette a friend sneaked in for me.

I was in Eastham, where mostly everyone was a convict. The difference between an inmate and a convict is that a convict is quieter and minds his own business and just does his time. But you'd better not mess with him or disrespect him, because he sure will kill you. I wish that kind were still around, because you can do time with a good convict. The place was quieter and more respectful. But now, there is no respect. Everybody yells when they talk. They like to get into other people's business, start rumors, and snitch on you.

On December 4, 1984, while I was at the mess hall at Eastham Unit, eating a damn hot link with sauerkraut (lunch), an officer approached and told me to get up and leave. I told him that I had [illegible] He picked up my tray and slammed it into my chest, food and all. He then told me to pick it up and get [illegible]

Well, I [illegible] When I walked away, I turned and said, "I'll be back." He responded, "That's what they all say, but I'll make sure [illegible] to get my friends, drag you to solitary, and make sure you don't see [illegible] I knew what that meant. I've heard of inmates who got beaten to death. And from what I saw those days, I believed it. So I went to my cell, packed all my belongings, got a bag of Maxwell House coffee, and went to [illegible] I put the bag of coffee on the domino table and said, "Here is a [illegible] I'm [illegible] my pillow." I sat down and watched TV with my back toward the table. Ten minutes later some[illegible]

I went to my cell and looked under my pillow, and there was the shank.

I saw the officer standing in front of the mess hall talking to another officer. I went up to him and stabbed him in the back. I was thinking that if I was going down, he was going to go down with me. But the knife was too thick and it didn't penetrate deep enough.

He fell to the floor. The other officers grabbed me and cuffed me. The officer that was on the floor got up and pulled out his knife, a buck knife he had in his pocket, and tried to stab me. Another officer stopped him. I regret stabbing him. I could have been home a few years ago. Also, I believe I was wrong; I should have just let it go.

In the morning I was transferred to Ramsey. By then, 1985, the gangs were taking over. I myself had not gotten involved in prison gangs yet, but I was put in a recreation group with five Texas Syndicate members. The administration wanted them to think I was some kind of informer, so they would end up stabbing me. Those gang members told me that it was not going to work and just to keep out of hearing distance when they were having their meetings.

Once, an inmate was found stabbed to death under a mat in the bathroom. He had been dead for at least three hours. Another inmate was also stabbed. He was still alive when the officers asked him who had stabbed him. The inmate stated that he stabbed himself—twenty-two times. These were his last words, and he died.

A riot went on at Ramsey for about four to six months—rattling the cell doors and banging on the steel bunks day and night! I don't know how I got any sleep during those days. People were burning mattresses and flooding by flushing the toilets; they broke all the windows and then all the toilets and sinks. When the officers would come into the cell blocks, everyone would throw body waste, steel soup bowls, and food trays at them. There was smoke everywhere because of the fires.

After the riot, inmates who were living by themselves were made to live with a cellmate. This was a big mistake! Next thing you know, gang members were killing other gang members [illegible]. Some inmates would [illegible] coming back from recreation [illegible] to the cell when the door closed, the officer would tell the inmate to back up to the cell door so he could take off the handcuffs. When the inmate backed up, his cellmate would jump up and attack him.

I was put in the cell with a Texas Syndicate member. Nothing bad happened; we got along well. We smoked marijuana, listened to the radio, and did our time. Before I was transferred out, the leader of the Texas Syndicate asked me to become one of their gang members. I said yes. I was transferred to a new ad. seg. [administrative segregation] in August 1985. It was very cold there during winter, and there was no heating system. We had learned not to break the windows, but the officers would sometimes leave them open intentionally. We would set fire to the plastic food trays and lean them against the walls inside our cells to get warm. The hard plastic burned for a long time. By then I was involved in the gang, and I used to vote on gang hits through the mail. There were other gang activities, business matters, etc. I learned how to make invisible ink with vitamin C tablets and a yellow marker.

My mother passed away in 1987, and I began thinking more about what I was going to do with my future. I had no GED and no job skills whatsoever. How was I going to take care of my family when I got married?

I was getting tired of this gang stuff. Everything was going downhill. Even business. The new recruits were too young and stupid. They were not properly investigated. Everybody was at each other's throats, and all they thought about was killing one another. I wrote a letter to the gang leader and quit the Texas Syndicate. So they put a hit on me.

I wanted to blend in with the TDC system and get away from the gangs. TDC didn't and doesn't have any GED programs or job skills in ad. seg., so I had to get released to the regular inmate population. There was only one way that I could do that. I had to go to a psychiatric unit.

In order to get there, I set fire to my cell. It didn't work. Then I hanged myself, without getting hurt. It didn't work either. Finally I cut my arm. My intention was to cut only skin, but the razor blade was too sharp and hit a vein. I woke up at John Sealy Hospital in Galveston.

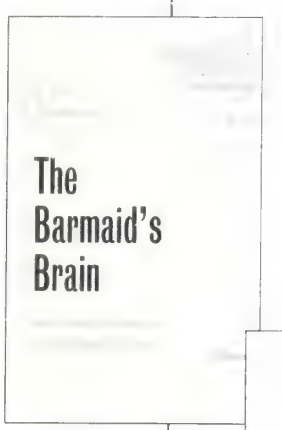
An inmate told the warden I was a gang member using the psychiatric unit to get released to the regular inmate population, so I was transferred back to ad. seg. at Ramsey. There were no educational programs, so I had to file some grievance complaints in order to take the GED. I passed the GED and received my certificate on April 23, 1992.

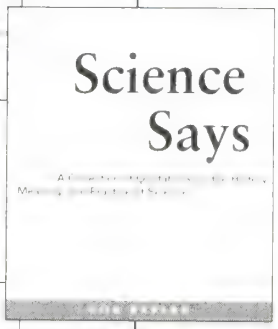
I needed job skills, but in order to participate in a vocational program I had to be part of the regular inmate population. I asked the administration, and, after being in ad. seg. for ten years, I was finally released to the regular population. It was a great feeling. Finally being able to go to the gym, mess hall, and showers. I was very happy!

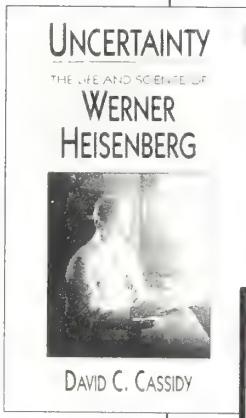
I completed the microcomputer-application vocational. I also became a Muslim. I was determined to learn as many job skills as I could. I completed the welding vocational, and after a

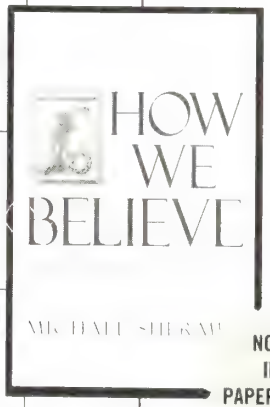
Just think.

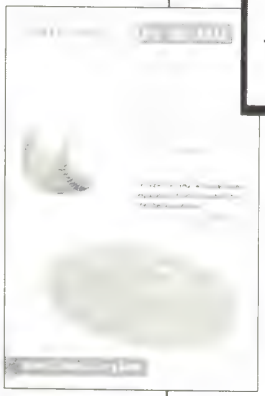
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WITNESS FOR THE EXECUTION

[illegible] to witness the execution of Max on Black, the fifth [illegible] to be executed in Texas this year. He was executed four hours after it was posted.

[illegible], Huntsville, TX

My name is Michael Toney. Most people call me Cowboy. I am on Texas's death row, awaiting execution for a crime I did not commit. In a country where Texas law for a person who has been convicted of a crime to profit from the crime itself. I do not intend to profit. However, I have a responsibility to my two beautiful daughters. I have a right to choose five people to witness my execution. I have decided to auction the five by taking bids on each of the seats. The two highest bidders will be asked to donate the amount of their bid to my children. I imagine the bidders will be one of two types: a compassionate person who understands what I am doing and wishes to help my children overcome the obstacle of their father's death, or a sadist. I will thank the compassionate and I will forgive the sadists.

My dedication to right to my responsibility to my children, whom I have neglected for [illegible] years, and to shed some light on the injustices in this country, and especially those in Texas. I know that innocent people [illegible] executed.

[illegible] determined not [illegible] will with how my right to [illegible] the execution. About six months [illegible] my execution date. My [illegible] will take place within the following [illegible] in Huntsville, Texas. [illegible] for those who may [illegible] lethal injection is not the painless and humane [illegible] you with a detailed description of my feelings of [illegible] will execute [illegible] my last breath.

[illegible] to write to me, but I want you to [illegible] this is legitimate. What could be more serious than death? If you would like more information, feel [illegible] mail [illegible].

while I signed up for the sheet-metal vocational at Michael Unit. I wanted to take my chances and stay at Michael Unit, but unfortunately I was recognized by some Texas Syndicate members. I was approached and told to write a letter of explanation about why I had renounced the gang. I knew they just wanted to fool me into thinking everything was okay while they planned their attack. So I went to speak to the gang intelligence officer and explained my situation. I usually like to stand up and fight, but not this time, no sir! I only had one more year to go, and I wanted to see the free world again!

I explained what had happened at Michael Unit and that I was told by the administrator there that everything would be explained on my record. But the Eastham Unit committee said my record only reflected that I had refused to complete the vocational. So they decided to put me back in the regular inmate population.

Five days later a friend and I were walking in the recreation yard when someone hit me on the back of the head and stabbed me twice in the back. I turned to look and saw two inmates, one with a knife and another with a metal lock tied to a rope. I fought back. I was not going to go down without taking one of them with me. I started punching the one with the knife. He stabbed my arm three times. I punched him again and he stabbed my side and punctured my lung, which collapsed. Then the other inmate hit me with the lock on the back of my head. Then my friend started to fight the inmate with the lock. I kicked the inmate that had the knife. He swung at me and I tried to grab the knife, but it went through my hand. He had tied the knife to his hand. He looked so young and scared, but I was determined to take him with me to the grave. But he backed off every time I walked toward him. Then he finally ran away.

You asked me how I feel about coming back to isolation. I understand that I'm being protected from getting stabbed again, but the way I'm being treated is wrong. I'm locked up in a cell twenty-three hours a day in a small building with no windows at all. I only get to watch TV one hour a day or go out to a small yard. Always by myself. Sometimes I really feel bad, like I'm going crazy. But I grab my holy Koran, do my five daily prayers, and try to maintain sanity. One thing's for sure, I will not fall into the trap that TDC wants me to fall into. TDC likes to create monsters out of people and then release them.

What I don't understand is that millions of tax dollars are being spent on these prisons, but they are no good. So where does the money go? A man can take a whole brick off the wall in two hours. Even the doors can be easily opened. Also, there are no education programs in any of [illegible]. Many inmates are denied parole be-

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TDC played in my change, none, I'm sorry to say. I risked my life to obtain an education and [illegible] and TDC did not give them to me on a silver platter. Yes, I am a changed man, but no one has changed me. I have only changed for my own good and only for myself.

[illegible] about staying away from prison is very difficult [illegible]. Anyone [illegible] to come back to prison. But then [illegible] outside these walls? I hope to find work as a [illegible] and I want to succeed and become a good citizen. But what opportunities do I have [illegible] incarcerated for nineteen years, and I doubt [illegible] I haven't had much contact with the outside world.

[illegible] I have any doubts that I'll make it out there. I'll just take [illegible]

[illegible]

GOT MILKEN?

[illegible] Who Moved Milken [illegible]

Michael Milken is often identified incorrectly in news reports because rushed copy edi- [illegible]

Certain clichés often creep into journalistic [illegible] Consider the *powerful* House Committee on Ways and Means; Panamanian *strongman* Manuel Noriega; former *junk bond king* Michael Milken; and many others that you could fill in.

"Junk bond king" is problematic for editors on several grounds:

- Using this term is equivalent to using a term like "murdered unborn child" in an article on abortion. That is, you are playing out the [illegible] of the issue.
- Milken didn't invent junk bonds. They go back centuries. In fact, the first U.S. treasury secretary, Alexander Hamilton, used them to finance the debt of our fledgling country.
- Milken was never as dominant as his opponents wanted the press to believe. His firm handled no more than 33 percent of the trading in high-yield securities. (What exactly is a "king" of a commercial field? Does the press refer to Bill Gates as the "software king" even though he controls more than 90 percent of the operating system market?)
- Those who mindlessly regurgitate "junk bond king" have no understanding of Milken's work or its complex theoretical underpinning. Simply stated, Milken believes that capital structure matters. That is to say, there is no one right way to capitalize a corporation.
- Calling him (as many have) "former Wall Street financier" (or "former" anything) is a bit like calling Harry Truman "former haberdasher," ignoring what he's done since then. And given the breadth of Milken's activities, "junk bond king" makes as much sense as calling Tiger Woods "the 7-iron king."

[Lawsuit]

NOT SO FAST, CASHMAN

[illegible] recently lost [illegible] copyright-infringement lawsuit brought by DC Comics, [illegible] the Superman comic book, against [illegible]

[illegible]

DC Comics claims that it made [illegible] all intellectual property rights to the original fictional character Superman. The Superman character [illegible] and is the subject of [illegible] books, television shows, and films.

In May of 1998, it came to the Plaintiff's attention that in television commercials promoting his business the Defendant had adopted and was using a character he referred to as Cashman. Cashman was and is Russell Oliver, dressed in costume, using the red, blue, and yellow color scheme of Superman. In addition, there were numerous design features of the Superman costume incorporated into the Cashman costume.

Furthermore, Clark Kent has always accomplished his transformation into the Superman character in the same well-known manner: Clark Kent enters a public telephone booth and begins to rapidly spin his body, creating a blur of activity, and then emerges transformed into the Superman character, whereupon he takes a triumphant stance as he exits the phone booth. Russell Oliver engages in the same activities.

The Defendant's unauthorized use of many important aspects of the Superman character in the Cashman character carries with it the implication that the Plaintiff has endorsed the use of the Superman character by the Defendant, and this implication is false and misleading.

Statement of Defense

The Defendant states that Cashman is entirely distinct from Superman and could cause no confusion in the marketplace or in the public's mind between the two characters.

Although Cashman utilizes the three colors of red, blue, and yellow, Cashman has an entirely different insignia. Whereas Superman's insignia contains a very stylized capital "S," Cashman's insignia is a circle with a dollar sign.

Cashman is entirely distinct in appearance and impression from Superman for the following reasons: the sole function of Cashman is to buy and sell jewelry; Cashman does not have an athletic physique; Cashman's comedic character is completely contrary to the image of Superman; Cashman was not born on the planet Krypton; Cashman is not portrayed to have the superpowers attributed to Superman, such as the ability to fly, invulnerability, super strength, super breath, X-ray vision, heat vision, or super ventriloquism; Cashman is not vulnerable to any of the numerous forms of kryptonite; Superman on no occasion has asked to buy or sell jewelry; in fact, Superman has no need to purchase jewelry as he has been known to mine jewelry for himself and to manufacture diamonds from the compression of coal using super strength; Superman at no time has been portrayed to be involved in a commercial enterprise; Cashman is not portrayed to be a mild-mannered reporter; Cashman is not portrayed to have any enemies such as Lex Luthor, Brainiac, or Mr. Mxyzptlk.

The Defendant therefore asks that this claim be dismissed.

[Consideration]

THE OLD DICTIONARY

By Lydia Davis, in the Fall 1999 issue of Bomb, *a quarterly published in New York City. Davis is currently at work on a translation of Marcel Proust's* Swann's Way *for Penguin U.K. Books*

I have an old dictionary, about 120 years old, that I need to use for a particular piece of work I'm doing this year. Its pages are brownish in the margins and brittle, and very large. I risk tearing them when I turn them. When I open the dictionary I also risk tearing the spine, which is already split more than halfway up. I have to decide, each time I think of consulting it, whether it is worth damaging the book further in order to look up a particular word. Since I need to use it for this work, I know I will damage it, if not today then tomorrow, and that by the time I am done with this work it will be in poorer condition than it was when I started, if not completely ruined. When I took it off the shelf today, though, I realized that I treat it with a good deal more care than I treat my young son. Each time I handle it I take the greatest care not to harm it: my primary concern is not to harm it. What struck me today was that even though my son should be more important to me than my old dictionary, I can't say that each time I deal with my son my primary concern is not to harm him. My primary concern is almost always something else; for instance, to find out what his homework is, or to get supper on the table, or to finish a phone conversation. If he gets harmed in the process, that doesn't seem to matter to me as much as getting the thing done, whatever it is. Why don't I treat my son at least as well as the old dictionary? Maybe it is because the dictionary is so obviously fragile. When a corner of a page snaps off, it is unmistakable. My son does not look fragile, slouching over a game or manhandling the dog. Certainly his body is strong and flexible, and it is not easily harmed by me. I have bruised his body and then it has healed. Sometimes it is obvious to me when I have hurt his feelings, but is harder to see how badly they have been hurt, and they seem to mend. It is hard to see if they mend completely or are forever slightly damaged. When the dictionary is hurt, it can't be mended. Maybe I treat the dictionary better because it makes no demands on me and doesn't fight back. Maybe I am kinder to

where I put them. Their second demand is for water. I water them but not regularly. Some of them don't grow very well because of that, and some of them die. Most of them are strange-looking rather than nice-looking. Some of them were nice-looking when I bought them but are strange-looking now because I haven't taken very good care of them. Most of them are in pots that are the same ugly plastic pots they came in. I don't actually like them very much. Is there any other reason to like a houseplant, if it is not nice-looking? Am I kinder to something that is nice-looking? But I could treat a plant well even if I didn't like its looks. I should be able to treat my son well when he is not looking good and even when he is not acting very nice. I treat the dog better than the plants, even though he is more active and more demanding. It is simple to give him food and water. I take him for walks, though not often enough. I have also sometimes slapped his nose, though the vet told me never to hit him anywhere near the head, or maybe he said anywhere at all. I am only sure I am not neglecting the dog when he is asleep. Maybe I am kinder to things that are not alive. Or rather if they are not alive there is no question of kindness. It does not hurt them if I don't pay attention to them, and that is a great relief. It is such a relief it is even a pleasure. The only change they show is that they gather dust. The dust won't really hurt them. I can even get someone else to dust them. My son gets dirty, and I can't clean him, and I can't pay someone to clean him. It is hard to keep him clean and even complicated trying to feed him. He doesn't sleep enough, partly because I try so hard to get him to sleep. The plants need two things, or maybe three. The dog needs five or six things. It is very clear how many things I am giving him and how many I am not, and therefore how well I'm taking care of him. My son needs many other things besides what he needs for his physical care, and these things multiply or change constantly. They can change right in the middle of a sentence. Although I often know, I do not always know just what he needs. Even when I know, I am not always able to give it to him. Many times each day I do not give him what he needs. Some of what I do for the old dictionary, though not all, I could do for my son. For instance, I handle it slowly, deliberately, and gently. I leave it alone a good deal of the time. I consider its age. I treat it with respect. I know its limitations. I do not encourage it to go further than it can (for instance, to lie open flat on the table). I stop and think before I use it.

RETURN TO LENDER

A partial list of the three items found in the pages of books returned to the Kansas City, Missouri, public library. The list was compiled by librarian [illegible].

1 gummy worm on a plastic stick
1 package of Stim-U-Dent for removal of food particles
1 [illegible] cigarette
1 color photograph of a grouping of Ex-Lax, Correctol, Tylenol, Scope, Visine, and Advil products
1 light-blue doll hat with "101" on brim
1 [illegible] cooked bacon
1 "peachy peach" car freshener in pine tree shape
1 construction-paper cutout of a [illegible]
1 pair of 3-D glasses
1 tuft of stuffed animal fur
1 plastic plant stick for an *Asarum europaeum* from White Flower Farms (deep green [illegible] shade, moist soil)
1 [illegible]
1 [illegible] key
1 flat silver turtle
1 slice of yellow cheese in plastic wrapper
1 Weightless Cinnamon-Spice dietetic [illegible]
1 yellow construction paper cutout of a duck
1 miniature paper Bible distributed by Sowers [illegible]
1 [illegible]
1 Missouri [illegible] Lottery ticket
1 St. James Place mortgage Monopoly card
1 package of Nail Magic nail color removal [illegible]
2 packages of Augustine Red "G or 3rd" guitar strings
1 [illegible]
1 [illegible]
1 memo slip with "Thanks for All You Do" printed [illegible]



Costanza [illegible] *Hans Purrmann* [illegible] *Villa Romana* [illegible] *Florence* [illegible] *Hans Purrmann between* [illegible] *1921* [illegible]

[Interview]

LIKE FRAGMENTS IN HARD VOYAGES

Exchanged with George Hunt in [illegible] *issue of* The Paris Review. *Hunt's questions:* Speech! Speech! *is a book-length poem and will be published this fall by* Counterpoint. *The interview was conducted by* Carol Phillips, *whose collection of poems* The Tether, *with by-published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in April.*

GH: Initially: What's one of the most relevant aspects of your work is the density of an overtly intellectual bent. In recent reviews of *Dear Linnets of Lust*, the word "difficult" is generally applied. People complain that it's hard to get through your sentences and understand them.

CP: Human beings are difficult.

We're difficult to ourselves, we're difficult to each other. And we're difficult to ourselves as we attempt to grapple with the encounters in any ordinary day far more real difficulty than one confronts in the most "intellectual" poem or novel. What is it about [illegible] poem that would [illegible] when if such simplification were applied to a [illegible] find it demeaning? I think art has a right—not an obligation—to be difficult if it wishes. And since people generally go on from this [illegible] would add that [illegible] And that [illegible]

GH: [illegible] Hans Purrmann [illegible] and Kierkegaardian scholar Theodor Haecker [illegible]

[Poems]

UNOCCUPIABLE I

By Paul Celan, translated from the German by Nikolai Popov and Heather McHugh, from 101 Poems by Paul Celan, *published this month by Wesleyan University Press*

In the most remote of
secondary senses, at the foot
of the paralyzed stairway of amens:
Existence, a phase
stripped bare.

Nearby, in the gutter,
common wisdoms
still wriggling.

Sleep secreted the contour,
dream fiber strengthened it.
At its single
heart-beaten temple
ice is forming.

No book opens up.

The Supernothing threw
its lot with me;
all ice,
it gives up the fight.

We're ready
to trade away our mortal inmost.

No reply — the thorn
climbs up through the cradles.

Behind the time clock,
time, immune to fools,
is giving itself away.

◆

Stone of incest, rolled away.

An eye cut out
from the doctor's kidney
stands in for Hippocrates
at the cosmetic perjury.

Salvos, sleep-bombs, gold gas.

I'm floating, I'm floating

◆

Open glottis, air flow,
the
vowel, active
with its one
formant,
consonant concussions, the
evidence largely screened out,

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Diana Krall
Joe Henderson

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Sonny Rollins
Thelonious Monk
John Coltrane
Charlie Parker &
Dizzy Gillespie
Duke Ellington
Coleman Hawkins
Herbie Hancock
Julian 'Cannonball' Adderley

VIVA DIVAS!
Diana Krall
Diana Krall
Billie Holiday
Ella Fitzgerald
Sarah Vaughan
Dinah Washington
Lena Horne
Nancy Wilson
Betty Carter
Cassandra Wilson
Carmen McRae

ON THE COOL SIDE
Miles Davis
Gerry Mulligan with
Chet Baker
Cal Tjader
Lennie Tristano
Lee Konitz Brad Mehldau
Charlie Haden
Jimmy Giuffre
June Christy
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Jim Hall

LOUIS ARMSTRONG AT 100!
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I'll Be G... 1248

THE ART OF THE BALLAD
Billie Holiday
Grant Green
Lee Morgan
Benny Green
Ranee Lee
Art Farmer
Eric Dolphy
Lee Konitz Charlie Haden
Brad Mehldau
Nancy Wilson

TOP BRASS
Lee Morgan
Donald Byrd
Kenny Dorham
Freddie Hubbard
Miles Davis
Miles Davis
Clifford Brown
Horace Silver
...My Father 1274
Art Farmer
Chet Baker
Art Farmer
Ornette Coleman

SMOOTH GROOVES
Pieces of a Dream
Dave Grusin Tonight 1277
Najee Sweet Love 1278
Dwight Sills
Medeski Martin & Wood
John Scofield
Fattburger
Bobbi Humphrey
Brian Hughes

George
Howard
Ronnie Laws

THE BIG BAND
Fats Navarro
Dizzy Gillespie &
Charlie Parker
Dexter Gordon
Thelonious Monk
Charlie Parker
Bud Powell Trio
Sonny Stitt
John Coltrane



SWINGTIME!
Duke Ellington
Benny Goodman
Count Basie
Buddy Rich
Harry James
Stan Kenton
Glenn Miller
Artie Shaw

JAZZ MOVIE SOUNDTRACKS
Dexter Gordon
Chet Baker
Carmen McRae
Johnny Hartman
Milt Jackson
Earl Klugh
Dave Koz
Everette Harp
James Siegel

CLASSIC JAZZ
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◆

line facility:

razzle-dazzle in the half-dark,

on you, remember, under the fit-
ful flares

the protective word
in a pressurized helmet,
for fresh-air vent.

Soul-welding, arc-light.

the lovely rhymy metal bellows
are being given
artificial respiration.

◆

Next-door neighbor Night.
Dwarf or giant-sized—it all
depends on the cut in the fingerpad,
on what
comes out of it.

At times, super-eyed,
when biconcave
a thought comes dripping
in, out of elsewhere.

◆

Here are the industrious
mineral resources (domestic)

here the insoluble riddle
of the jubilee year

(still there?),
shades' palaver

here the ice-adjusted fears
cleared for flight

here the undefaced wall

live your life right









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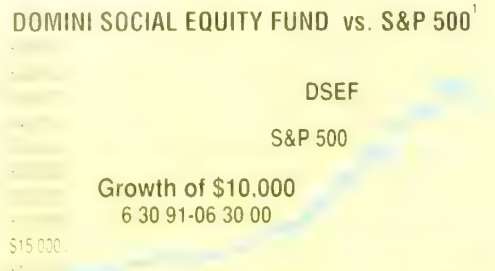
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ADHA009-07

A CITIZEN IN FULL

Ralph Nader campaigns for president with a course in civics

By Lewis H. Lapham

We can have a democratic society or we can have the concentration [illegible]

[illegible]

Ralph Nader [illegible] candidate for president on February 21 in Washington, [illegible] next two months the national news media were [illegible] preparation. Although well-known [illegible] of the two [illegible] standing something [illegible] the country's political [illegible] people [illegible] Nader didn't [illegible] much [illegible] Hollywood made a cameo appearance as the presidential candidate for the Green Party in 1996, but he didn't [illegible] people. What [illegible] of Columbia, didn't raise any money. Four years later, who knew whether he wasn't staging another futile gesture.

So little was said about Nader's presidential campaign in February and March that [illegible] April [illegible] supposedly well-informed (editors at Doubleday, columnists for [illegible] who hadn't been told. They had heard that somewhere west of the Pecos [illegible] Party, probably with [illegible] people [illegible] Ralph Nader. I could count [illegible] say." "Fancy that." "How very retro." Among respondents who thought the item "interesting . . . no, I mean it, really interesting, almost sweet," the clear majority regarded Nader as a romantic figure somehow reminiscent of [illegible] they expected to be hearing an inaugural address.

Most of the upscale media adopted a similarly complacent tone when they were obliged to take notice of Nader's campaign in early May. The candidate by then had placed his name on the ballot in fifteen states; actively [illegible] by [illegible] South Carolina, attracting endorsements from prominent celebrities

[illegible]

Throughout the presidential campaign, the Washington press corps treated Ralph Nader with the same attention paid to spotted owls and giant pandas. The *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *The Nation* sent scouts to observe the candidate in Hawaii, California, and New England, and the columnists confirmed the opinions in force at the nation's better news desks. Nader was the same old dreaming ideologue, gaunt and painfully earnest in austere denim in a dark but rumpled suit complaining about the all but infinite number of ways in which the de jure American democracy was being suffocated (also gulled, looted, and contemptuously mocked) by the de facto oligarchy. In brief and in sum, a preacher of discredited 1960s leftist doctrine, but because he hadn't learned the new and sprightly idiom made for television (the sound bite and the catch phrase in place of the long paragraph and the complete sentence), his audiences were reassuringly marginal and small—a few hundred student "goofballs" in Wisconsin, in California a thin haze of "patchouli and tie-dye, sarongs and navel rings," a scattering of bearded men in New Hampshire clutching kayak paddles.

Nader's candidacy continued to gain currency during the spring and early summer (his acceptance in Denver of the Green Party's presidential nomination, nearly $1 million raised in campaign contributions, his name on the ballot in another ten states), but the official portrait in the media (that of the harmless reformer, high-minded but faintly ridiculous) was not retouched until June 30, when the *New York Times* promoted him to the rank of public menace. The upgrade took the form of an impatient editorial, royalist in sentiment and pompous in tone, reprimanding Nader for his meddling in an election that was beyond his sphere of competence and indifferent to his concern.

> It is unconscionable self-indulgent exercise that will distract voters from the real choices represented by the major-party candidates, Vice President Al Gore and Governor George Bush.
>
> It is especially distressing to see Mr. Nader flirt with the spoiler role.
>
> Of course, both Mr. Bush and Mr. Nader have the right to run. But given the enormous stakes in this election, the respective Democratic and Republican constituencies and the near certainty that third-party candidacies this year and [illegible] major-party candidates' interests in an unclutter[illegible] playing field.

Disappointed? As well as primed, the editorialist acknowledged Nader's "impressive, issues-driven crusades" and took the trouble to commend him for championing the cause of automobile safety and having "deepened Americans' awareness of the flaws in their political system." Aware that it was distressing to see a man once principled destroy his reputation with [illegible] editorialist. His irresponsible behavior threatened Al Gore's chances in "swing states like California," and if he were a true gentleman and a real liberal [illegible] with the seat belts and leave the politics to the professionals.

I [illegible] on June 30 was the same day on which I had an interview Nader in Washington, also to accompany him on the [illegible] campaign headquarters on N.W. Fifteenth Street, [illegible] built during the Lincoln Administration (wrought-iron railings, the spaces narrow and Victorian), I discovered that it [illegible] Harrison. The [illegible] campaign was [illegible] students—young, idealistic, underpaid



Times editorial [illegible] Tickel called from Chicago to
[illegible] Nader and I remember that you're talking to your
[illegible] Democratic chairman Ted Kennedy told his next-autumn's Yale-
Harvard game.

The call from Nader [illegible] Tickel unable to take a similarly dismis-
sive view of candidates to the right of Lost Respect ("toadies [illegible] tinks").
[illegible] Nader on the phone, saying that when he had
[illegible] third-party candidate in 1968 the *Times* had cast him in the
same role—"spoiler," "ego-driven" nuisance, no friend of America. "You
would think," Nader said, "that in twenty years they could come up with
[illegible]."

The judges on the bench of prime-time opinion say that Nader lack
charisma. But the word admits of different interpretations, and if it can be
referred to a lively intelligence as well as a bright smile, Nader seems to
[illegible] more charismatic than David Letterman or Brad Pitt.
I know of few spectacles more entertaining than the play of a mind being
put to constructive or imaginative use, and I like to listen to Nader talk. I
never fail to learn something new, and in Nader's idealism I find an anti-
dote for the cynicism that constitutes an occupational hazard on the shop
floors of the image-making industries in New York.

Accepting the Green Party nomination in Denver on June 27, Nader
had presented his campaign as a question—"How badly do we want a just
and decent society, a society that raises our expectations of ourselves?"—
and in Washington three days later he supplemented it with further com-
mentary and explanation.

"Unlike Gush and Bore," he said, "I don't promote myself as a solution
to the nation's problems. The idea is to encourage a lot of other people to
use the tools of democratic government to take control of the assets they
hold in common—the public lands, the public broadcast frequencies, the
public money. Whatever your issue is, whether it's racism, homophobia,
taxes, health care, urban decay, you're not going to go anywhere with it
unless you focus on the concentration of power. We have an overdevel-
oped plutocracy and an underdeveloped democracy, too many private in-
terests commandeering the public interest for their own profit. Most
Americans don't realize how badly they're being harmed by the
unchecked commercialization of what belongs to the commonwealth. If
enough people knew what questions to ask, we have both the ways and
means to achieve better schools, a healthier environment, a more general
distribution of decent health care."

Nader has been asking the questions for forty years. He established his
reputation as a consumer advocate in 1965 when he published *Unsafe at
Any Speed*, a fierce indictment of the carelessness with which General
Motors manufactured its cars. The book resulted in legislation that forced
G.M. to improve its automotive designs, and Nader went on to search out
further proofs of malfeasance almost everywhere else in corporate Amer-
ica, filing investigative briefs against oil companies, banks, hospitals; pub-
lishing another twenty books (about corporate accountability, the judici-
ary [illegible] committees in both the Senate and the House, etc.);
organizing numerous civic-minded committees (among them the Cent[illegible]
to [illegible] Businesses Toward the Public Interest Research Group[illegible]
and bringing about, or at least setting in train, changes for the better in
the management of the country's pension funds, classified informatio[illegible]
[illegible] ways.

He [illegible] he said, "never wants anyone to know what, or ho[illegible]
[illegible] ordinary citizens can accomplish if they learn to use the power of
their own laws. Apathy is good for business-as-usual; so is cynicism. Th[illegible]
[illegible] always good for business as usual is the lie that art is dead. Bo[illegible]
[illegible] entrenched mediocrity. Convince the kids th[illegible]
[illegible] history is at an end, that nothing important re-
mains to be discovered, done, or said, and maybe they won't ask why[illegible]

corporate CEO receives a salary four hundred times greater than that of the lowest paid worker in his own company.

"I hear young people saying that they're not turned on to politics, and I tell them that if you do not turn on to politics, politics will turn on you."

The first of Nader's television appearances, a taped broadcast for CNN's *Crossfire* was scheduled for 2:00 P.M., but he was slow to finish talking to a reporter from *Business Week* (making a last point about a criminal justice system set up to provide customers for the corporate prison industry), and in the car Theresa Amato, his campaign manager, worried about being late.

"They get irritated if they're made to wait," she said.

"Journalists like to get irritated," Nader said. "It helps them ask tough questions."

The traffic was heavier than the CNN driver had anticipated, but Nader was indifferent to the delay. He was carrying his customary file of papers, and if no better subject of conversation turned up on the way to the studio, he was content to leaf through a report estimating the number of annual deaths (80,000) from hospital malpractice or an inventory of the California hydroelectric system (174 dams, 99 reservoirs, 68 power plants, 350 miles of artificial waterways) due to be sold at auction by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. He draws the strength of his convictions from his knowledge of the facts, often staying up until 5:00 A.M. in the company of the Congressional Record or court transcripts that would intimidate anybody less relentless about the study of public policy. His diligence reminded me of my own sluggishness when confronted with official documents and government prose—I can barely force myself to read the abbreviated text of a Supreme Court decision, or a speech by any senator other than Ernest Hollings—and referring to a point that Nader had made to the Denver convention about the American electorate conditioned to think of politics as brand-name product merchandising, I asked him what it was that he expected from people who had trouble following the plot lines of *The Patriot* and *The Perfect Storm*. Who had time to read The Federalist Papers, much less a federal budget report that weighed forty pounds and ran to the length of 40,000 pages?

"One of the ways to define freedom," he said, "is as a taking part, even a very small part, in the dispositions of political power. If every year in this country one million people gave 100 hours of their time to some sort of public purpose, 100 hours and $100, I think we'd be surprised by the number of changes we could make. Obviously I don't have any chance of winning the election, but if in November I can draw 5 percent of the vote, the Green Party possibly could establish itself as a credible voice capable of asking the right questions."

The car was again stalled in traffic, Theresa on a cell phone keeping CNN informed of our whereabouts and Nader interrupting himself long enough to notice a billboard advertisement of Tiger Woods wearing the Nike swoosh on his golf shirt and baseball cap. The photograph prompted Nader to remember that Nike's ad agency once sent him a fax offering $25,000 for eight words of modish irony.

"The agency knew that I'd been making speeches about Asian children sewing sneakers for sixty cents a day, and they wanted me to say, 'Another shameless attempt by Nike to sell shoes.' Can you imagine that? I mean, the way those people think? I sent back an email saying no, and they gave the money and the line to Spike Lee."

Situated across First Street behind Union Station, the CNN building exemplifies an architectural style fairly described as neofascist modern, a lot of glass at sharp angles, the lobby rich in marble and decorated with a single oversized painting of a golf course, and by the time we'd been hurried into the studio, Bob Novak and Bill Press, the two hosts of *Crossfire*

NADER DRAWS THE STRENGTH OF HIS CONVICTIONS FROM HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE FACTS. HE IS OFTEN IN THE COMPANY OF THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[illegible] BETWEEN BUSH
[illegible] THE RELATIVE
[illegible] WITH WHICH THEIR
[illegible] THE THE HOSPITALS THE
[illegible] CORPORATIONS KNOCKED

[illegible] to represent opposing points of view (Novak the square, [illegible] Press the [illegible] liberal), already had taken the [illegible] As Nader was being ushered to his seat at the table be[illegible] Novak and I found Press leaning against a back wall, and Nova[illegible] candidate with a recondescending joke.

"Well, Ralph," he said, "I see that you have brought the whole of you[illegible] bloated campaign staff."

Nader let the remark pass without comment, and while the technician[illegible] fixed his microphone Novak turned to the teleprompter to read the oper[illegible] Smoothing his vest, adjusting his tie, he puffed up his voice int[illegible] the registers of mock urgency and canned sensation, bringing his viewe[illegible] the promise of furious debate—"Ralph Nader in the crossfire. Ralph Nad[illegible] er and his third-party presidential campaign. Will it last? Will he fin[illegible] money? Will he take votes from Al Gore? Is he serious? Can he win?"

The lights went briefly down, and during the lull that accompanied th[illegible] first commercial break, Novak sagged back into the posture of a bore[illegible] Washington courtier, the Rosencrantz to Bill Press's Guildenstern (or, [illegible] alternate days of the week, the Guildenstern to Press's Rosencrantz); [illegible] was obvious that with respect to the questions he had just asked, his an[illegible] swer to all of the above was no. Nor was he particularly interested in th[illegible] interview that he was about to conduct. Nader quite clearly wasn't goin[illegible] to be given tours of the White House or tipping anybody off to tomo[illegible] row's bombing of Belgrade. But the show was the show, and what Nova[illegible] had to sell was the sport of bearbaiting. When the lights again came u[illegible] he instantly regained the pose of "the citizen who cares" and began a ga[illegible] Did a reformation along the lines of the morning editorial in the *Time*[illegible] "Are you really totally indifferent to these two candidates?" "If you we[illegible] to take away enough votes from California to carry the state for Geor[illegible] Bush, I think that might elect him. Does that give you trouble sleeping?"

Nader said he could sleep. The Democratic Party had shifted its thin[illegible] ing and policies so far to the right that the only difference between Bus[illegible] and Gore was the relative velocity "with which their knees hit the flo[illegible] when the big corporations knocked on the door."

Which was Bill Press's cue to show that he, too, disapproved of Nader[illegible] nonsense about the civil society being suffocated under the designer labe[illegible] of the corporate state. Boldly advancing against the assertion that Demo[illegible] rats were no different from Republicans, Press managed a strong flutter [illegible] stern disagreement.

"I don't buy that premise," he said. "I just don't buy it, Ralph. Al Go[illegible] is an outstanding environmentalist."

Nader began to explain his reasons for saying what he'd said (i.e., wi[illegible] specific reference to the Clinton Administration's record on child welfa[illegible] medical insurance, national forests, the Glass-Steagall Act, etc., etc.), b[illegible] well before he could bring to the bill of indictment it was time for anoth[illegible] commercial break, but as soon as the camera returned for the second h[illegible] of the program, Novak was talking about "Ralph Nader, consumer advoca[illegible] multimillionaire." He had seen a newspaper report placing Nader's n[illegible] worth at $4 million, and real money in the hands of anybody to the left [illegible] Wasn't Bill Clinton himself prima facie evidence of hypocrisy. Liber[illegible] Marxists, Novak said, were often poverty was what made them liberals.

So, said Novak, as if peering under a pillow or a rock, you have $4 m[illegible] I suppose the number was about right, but he went on to expl[illegible] that he lived on only a small fraction of the income and gave the bulk [illegible] it to his several public action committees. The answer didn't satisfy N[illegible] ak, and for the next fifteen minutes, attempting to discredit Nade[illegible] claim to the prerogatives of an idealist, he pursued the subject with qu[illegible] to what banks Nader was invested in, in what kind of stocks, and wh[illegible] Ghosts, ghouls, and nightmares, enemies of the people, creatures of t[illegible] corporate state. Nader answered the quiz without embarrassme[illegible] Novak's questions grew more and more [illegible] and the interview deteriorated into [illegible]

lanned irrelevance. Novak made a last patronizing remark (about Nader repaying his campaign contributors with stock-market tips), and then, adjusting his vest and smoothing his tie, signed off on the line, "See you down the trail."

Twenty minutes later we were back in the car, and Nader was saying that he thought the show had gone about as well as could be expected. I had seen the broadcast as farcical, but Nader merely shrugged.

"What was really funny," he said, "was Bill Press awarding Gore the title of 'outstanding environmentalist.'"

Noticing by my expression that I didn't appreciate the joke, he cited the list of issues on which Gore had sold out his avowed concern for the environment to the highest corporate bidder—oil development in Alaska, organic food standards, greenhouse gases, ozone-depleting chemicals, the California redwoods. Gore's speeches about the environment, he said, are for the most part "shameless bullshit."

"When people tell me that I'm wrecking the Democratic Party, I ask them what's left to wreck. The Democratic Party isn't going to heal itself. If it went and stood in a cold shower for the next four years, maybe it would think of something to do and say that isn't already being done and said by the Republican Party."

A block south of Nader's campaign headquarters the car stopped in traffic next to the front entrance to the Madison Hotel, a Washington *mise en scène* much frequented by high-end lobbyists. Nader watched the doorman bow to two heavyset men, one of them in naval uniform, carrying expensive leather briefcases.

"Other critics tell me that I ought to work 'within the system,' but people 'within the system' don't welcome new ideas. They like to talk about social change, but when it comes to actually doing something, they remember that social change is outrageous, un-American, and wrong. Look at the history of the country. I don't care whether you're talking about the revolution of 1776, or abolitionists forcing the issue of slavery in the 1850s, about women's suffrage, the late nineteenth-century populist revolt against the eastern banks and railroads, the trade-union movement, Social Security, meat inspection, civil rights. The change invariably begins with people whom the defenders of the status quo denounce as agitators, communists, hippies, weirdos. And then, ten or twenty years later, after the changes have taken place, the chamber of commerce discovers that everybody's profits have improved. The captains of industry never seem to understand that a free democracy is the precondition for a free market; try to turn the equation the other way around, and you end up with an economy like the one in Indonesia."

By the time we returned to the building on N.W. Fifteenth Street three more newspapers had called with requests for interviews, *60 Minutes* had expressed interest, and Tom Brokaw's producers had asked if it might be possible for Tom to follow Nader into Minnesota with a camera crew. The campaign staff was impressed, but not to the extent of sending out for beer and paper hats. Like their candidate, they understood the political crisis in the country not as an ideological quarrel between liberal and conservative, Democrat and Republican, but rather as an argument between the people who would continue the American experiment and those who believe the experiment has gone far enough, between the inertia conducive to acceptance of things-as-they-are and the energy inherent in the hope of things-as-they-might-become. The party of things-as-they-are always can count on the support of a comfortable majority; it is the party of the military defense budget, *Time* magazine, and the lobbyists working the bar at the Madison Hotel; and it buys a lot of expensive advertising to sell the notion that nothing important remains to be said, discovered, or done. Nader's campaign staff had only to consult the listings in that morning's paper (Congress sending $1.3 billion to the lost drug war in Colombia, another insurance company found guilty of

"WHEN PEOPLE TELL ME THAT I'M WRECKING THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, NADER EXPLAINS, "I ASK THEM WHAT'S LEFT TO WRECK."

"ASKED IF HE KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, RALPH NADER SAID, 'WELL, I DON'T KNOW ANYBODY WHO HAS SUED MORE OF THEM'"

systematic fraud) to know that the advertising was false. But they were je
kind of people who knew that one had to begin somewhere, and I had e
feeling that win or lose on November 7, 4 percent or 6 percent, they wo d
begin again the next day with their purpose still in place and their idealin
still intact, if not working on the project of a presidential election then po i-
bly on a study of the low-income-housing market in Atlanta or an investi-
tion of Daimler-Chrysler's looting of the city of Toledo.

To the delegates at the Green Party convention in Colorado, Nader had defined his politics as "first and foremost a movement of thought, n of belief," and later in the afternoon, riding in a taxi to the PBS studio n Arlington, Virginia, I asked him whether politics so defined didn't set h n up for a good deal of disappointment.

"Maybe it would if I were into mood changes," he said.

The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer allotted Nader ten minutes at the top f the broadcast and didn't bother with the theatrics of false confrontatio. Lehrer asked straightforward questions, but they were so tired and perfu tory that it was apparent he didn't understand Nader's critique of the sh n democracy. Nor, like Novak and Press, did he seem to know what w meant by the phrase "economic injustice." Where was the problem, a why the complaint? Here we all were in the most prosperous society ever o see the light of heaven, real estate prices going nowhere but up, the ever e panding middle class floating in suburban swimming pools on the buoya mattress of the Nasdaq, and why were we talking about poor people?

In the time allowed, the conversation couldn't become anything oth than an exchange of platitudes, but it permitted at least one memora e question and answer. Lehrer was asking Nader what he would do in a with the office of the presidency in the unlikely event that he won election. How could Nader possibly appreciate the complex workings o all those vast and complex government agencies in Washington?

Nader paused for a moment, as if he couldn't quite believe what h just heard. Then he laughed and said, "Well, I don't know anybody w has sued more of them."

The station provided another taxi to return Nader to Washington, a he offered to drop me at the airport if I still had policy issues that I wish to raise. Once again we found ourselves stalled in traffic, but over t course of the next half hour I mostly asked less lofty questions abo Winona LaDuke, the vice presidential candidate on the Green Party tic et, and his plans for the Fourth of July. About LaDuke he didn't seem know much more than what was printed in his campaign literature. An dian woman, a White Earth Anishinaabeg from Minnesota, Harvard ed cated, an author, a social activist who shared his views on foreign tra and human rights. He'd met her a few years ago and had been impressed her integrity and strength of character; he knew of no finer person in t United States. For the Fourth of July he had no plans.

It was hard to picture him shaking hands with a holiday crowd Coney Island, or riding a white horse around the ring of a Montana rod but I could imagine him handing out copies of the Constitution to au mobile workers in Detroit, and as the plane to New York climbed into steep turn over the Potomac, the sight of the Lincoln Memorial in t lovely evening light reminded me that a democratic republic knows higher rank or title than that of citizen. The media prefer celebrities, w come and go like soup cans or summer moths, unthreatening a ephemeral. Cheaply produced and easily replaced, made to the measure our own everyday weakness, celebrities ask nothing of us except a rou of applause. Like President Clinton, they let us off the hook. Nader s the hook on the sharp points of obligation to a higher regard for our o intelligence and self-worth. Less interested in the counting of votes th in the lesson of freedom, he mounts his campaign on the proposition th the party of things-as-they-are depends for its continued survival on t party of things-as-they-might-become.

ESCANABA'S MAGIC HOUR

Movies, robot deer, and the American small town

By Tom Bissell

magic hour: *The brief periods of dawn and dusk that allow enough light for shooting, but also create some striking effects on film.*
—*The Complete Film Dictionary*

EXT. ESCANABA AREA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELD—TWILIGHT

In the hard cold of a waning afternoon in early March, I stand on the hash-marked permafrost of my hometown football field in Escanaba, Michigan, and wait for a motion picture to be filmed. So far, I have seen almost nothing of what moviemaking is rumored to consist. I *have* seen a brief game of touch football break out among the crew. I *have* seen the film's star, writer, and director, Jeff Daniels, field the same question from four different journalists. I *have* been introduced to one of those journalists by Daniels, an irreducibly dreamlike introduction, since that journalist happened to be my childhood best friend, Mike. I *have* seen many, many lights—enormous, mutant lights whose wattage is equal to a perpetual camera flash—moved all over the place and overheard complicated justifications for doing so. And I *have* listened to three Escanabans, huddled near the field's entrance, tell me what they think of the production: "It's interesting," "It's interesting," and "Pretty interesting."



The one scene on tonight's call sheet is a nightmare sequence in which Daniels's character realizes he is standing in his underwear before a stadium of Escanabans. The film's producers were hoping for a turnout of 4,000 local extras. What looks to be 600 have been herded into the center section of the bleachers, leaving huge swaths of seating utterly empty. The trouble no doubt began with the request for extras the Movie People placed in Escanaba's daily newspaper. There were three provisos.

Proviso One: *No one would be allowed to bring alcoholic beverages.* Why this is a problem: Escanaba is the sort of place where family friends earn nicknames like A Liter Later. Booze is, quite simply, a cultural staple.

Proviso Two: *No one would be allowed to wear "any clothing from professional sports teams,"* since to do so would force the producers to pony up permissions fees. Why this is a problem: Escanaba is the sort of place where people (*people*, meaning more than one) paint their homes the colors of their favorite football team. More often than not, this means the green and gold of the Green Bay Packers. It is immensely difficult for many grown-up Escanabans to leave their homes without some NFL logo displayed somewhere on their bodies. Many people's "good" coats happen to be expensive leather jackets the breasts of which are emblazoned with a gigantic Packers G. This is not to suggest that these people don't own other, non-NFL-related clothing, only that to forbid it, for whatever reason, is to disapprove of it, and since rural Midwesterners are highly self-conscious, a good way to ensure that large numbers of them will not show up for your movie shoot is to tell them what they can and cannot wear.

Proviso Three: *No one would be allowed to leave his or her seat, not even for bathroom breaks.* Why this is a problem, from what I was able to gather earlier in the day, this simply baffled everyone. A woman I ran into at the mall all but scoffed at the idea of sitting still for four hours "without a bath-

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Photograph © Pat Goodheart

Escanaba's delicate musculature too well. Th
Movie People might leave, but they will never b
gone. This movie will be, forever, a part of it.

An incidental curiosity of living in New Yor
City, as I do, is how often one finds oneself on th
entertainment industry's participatory edge. On
learns quickly to correct one's path as to leav
undisturbed the crew doing exterior shots for *Lat*
& Order* as they wait for the perfect wash of Sun
day-morning light to fall across Beekman Stree
The immense grandeur of cities, like that
movies, is often the hatch through which peopl
escape places such as Escanaba. Although the ul
escape is spatial and difficult to repeal, the movi
escape is much simpler—a temporal hegira
ninety minutes in familiar darkness. This is wha
makes the Movie People's presence in Escanab
so incongruous. Rather than supply Escanaba wit
their industry's latest distraction, the Movie Peopl
will make Escanaba itself distraction's newest ten
plate. In return, Escanaba will play the part
that myth-fogged place so popular with Holly
wood's illustionists: the American small town.

"Escanaba" is an Ojibway word meaning
ther "red buck" or "flat rock." (Local gallows hu
mor holds that the Ojibway were exterminated be
fore this could be cleared up.) It is not
wholesome town, no clean-living idyll wher
Clark Kent comes of age. The summers are love
ly but brief, the winters long and Siberian. It
industries are extractive and blue-collar. It
tourists, who usually come from nearby, ever
timer towns, refer to Escanaba as "the city."
once believed it was a pretty place, then drov
through New England in October. The good
looking, athletic boys I went to high school wit
did not go on to Yale or Wall Street. Many ar
still here, managing restaurants or selling cars
The people are not especially nice, which is no
to say Escanaba does not have many fine people
"Nice" is a surface with little relation to inner de
cency. It takes some doing in our Pentium
processed time to be Caucasian and poor, bu
there is a lot of solemn Caucasian poverty in Es
canaba. This is best illustrated by the local news
paper's personals section, in which a dispropor
tionate number of ads begin: "DWF, 21, singl
mother . . ."

The question remains: whether "small town
signifies anything today beyond its modest ad
jective-noun mandate. The Census Bureau re
fuses to define what a "small town" is. A city, ac
cording to its definition, is any settlement
more than 25,000 people. Anything below tha
is, in its unromantic tautology, a "place." A st
tute for a way of life upon which whole architec
tures of faith were once built, and one wonder
if the Movie People are here as apostates or re
vivalists to conduct services through the small
town's abandoned pews.

I abandon my colleagues and sidle toward the half-dozen Movie People gathered at midfield, all of them huddled around Daniels's stand-in, an Escanaban named Rob Hosking. A steadicam operator walks a tight circle around Rob, beginning his sweep focused on Rob's face and ending it with a clinching shot of the stadium's bleachers. Gary Goldman, Daniels's assistant director, watches the shot's rehearsal on a handheld monitor. Gary is a good-natured, ruthlessly efficient commercial director from New York. He wears sunglasses regardless of available daylight and a tight white ball cap one suspects is in place to keep his skull from detonating. "Let's do it again," Gary tells the Steadicam operator, then speaks, commando-style, into the miked collar of a sporty Day-Glo orange jacket. "Right side. Camera right side. Copy."

As the sun sets behind the thick pine stand that perimeters the football field, the lack of extras begins to become a problem. To appreciate how crucial extras are to tonight's filming, one must know several things about Michigan's Upper Peninsula. First, citizens of the Upper Peninsula are known as "Yoopers," a transliterative byproduct of "U.P.," as this underpopulated and sparsomely bleak stretch of land is known. The U.P. is separated from the rest of Michigan culturally and geographically, connected only by the Mackinac Bridge, an architectural marvel built as recently as 1957. The U.P. might be the most rural part of the country, as well as its least familiar. (Some maps neglect to include the border separating the U.P. from Wisconsin, an accidental annexation that, if made official, would please the vast majority of Yoopers, who feel a stronger cultural identification with Wisconsin anyway. Finally—and in light of tonight's scene, not to mention the whole film, this is a key point—for Yoopers, deer hunting has near religious significance. The first day of deer season is actually a school holiday—Deer Day, it is called—and the entire place is a gun-crazy hotbed of the most intolerable sort. Despite this, there were, in 1997, in the Upper Peninsula, a landmass larger than Massachusetts and Connecticut combined, which contains a population of 300,000 Schlitz-drinking, deer-slaying yahoos, a grand total of eight murders.

In *Escanaba in da Moonlight*, Daniels plays Reuben Soady, a luckless forty-three-year-old who stands in danger of becoming the oldest Soady in history to have never bagged a buck. The film—which is, incidentally, a comedy—details Reuben's efforts to kill a deer. Some will perhaps be unsurprised that the film is being independently produced. Even Daniels, in my interview with him, was quick to point out that he doesn't hunt, and that the film is really a love story. Let me say that, as an erstwhile Yooper, I am not especially fazed by the script's deer-murdering aspects, even though I do not hunt either. I hunt [illegible] mental chamber [illegible] al Americans, for whom the [illegible] tween *prey* and *pool* and [illegible] to justify. More to the point, [illegible] est terrestrial mammal [illegible] known. They are [illegible] When not eating or breeding, they like to launch themselves into traffic. If [illegible] gun were abolished, the [illegible] living obstacle course.



JEFF DANIELS DIRECTS ACTOR WAYNE DAVID PARKER

Reuben's nightmare, then, finds him before his mocking fellow Escanabans, all of whom chant "Buckless! Buckless!" and wave aloft signs that say things like "[illegible]" If [illegible] comes off, the film could mark the first instance in cinematic history of a central character being derided for his inability to slaughter a highly beloved constituent of the animal kingdom.

The walk-through [illegible] and the Hug-Hock in two comedy [illegible] with no [illegible] over the [illegible] crew [illegible] Daniel emerges [illegible] cross and walk [illegible] him, the crowd [illegible] lines into [illegible] flannel [illegible] ingly mild [illegible] rible. This is the first [illegible] twenty-hour workday has etched some new crag into the topography of his face. Since the film's finances were raised privately, whether he will ever [illegible]







Michael Douglas in such clear defiance of celebrity's iron laws, but puzzling in a pleasing, even in-

crowd. A small, startled cheer. Daniels mock-re-

innominate huzzah. Daniels segues into a prancing burlesque, whipping off his flannel and throw-

Mike's instant derision, scuttles across the field snap pictures. "Hey, we like it!" one undeniab intoxicated voice shouts back at Daniels, who, he turns away from the crowd, is smiling not t rictus of celebrity but an actual human smile.

"Well," Daniels mutters as he walks past m "We got a few people. It *is* three degrees out he They're not stupid."

As some final preparations are undertaken wander up into the stands, looking for someo I know. The crowd is not my demographic, m of its members very old or very young. I do see the stands a number of well-dressed middle-ag women who "support" the town in its every e deavor, whether it happens to be turning out f the filming of a movie or the construction of i ternment camps. My PRESS button earns me se eral "Hello!"s from crowd members, each fo lowed by a hurt silence when they realize I do n plan on interviewing them. A duo of ear-muff junior-high girls assails me, both asking if I wr for the local newspaper. I tell them why I'm he "*Herpes Magazine?*" one gasps, and rushes ov to a gaggle of friends. "*Herpes Magazine*" see quick, contagionlike spread throughout this sm portion of crowd. I am on my way back to the fi when I see two quiet boys sitting in the fro row. Both are decked out in green-brown ca ouflage, and they observe the Movie People ve closely. I sit next to the boys and ask them wh they think. "I think it's really cool," the old one, Scott, tells me. He shakes his head. "Not ing really *happens* in this town. Now that ther something pretty big happening, people will thi Escanaba's pretty cool."

Scott knows nothing of the difficulty Dani faces in getting this film distributed. He does n know that, despite the alien style with which t Movie People comport themselves, fully ni tenths of them are from Michigan. All he kno is that a movie camera will soon turn our way, a that, when it does, our small hometown in t middle of nowhere will be the only place in t world that matters. Scott's anticipation is so tense that, for a moment, I believe this, too.

EXT. MAIN STREET—NIG

After tonight's filming, Mike and I dr down Main Street. It is 10:00 P.M. o Saturday night and the streets are em ty, the stoplights set on hypnotic yellow blink. canaba seems vaguely unwell. Nearly everyth is closed. When one thinks of small towns, no t words are as suggestive as "Main Street." They up tableaux of a tree-lined avenue where day's business is leisurely but efficiently tra acted, a bustling vena cava through which ev citizen passes to reach her town's rejuvenat heart. But Escanaba's heart has been stopp dead by the coronary thrombosis of commer

Photographs by AP / Wide World (top); © Pat Goddard (le

expansion out on Lincoln Road, a McDonald's and Burger King- *and* Wendy's- *and* Blockbuster- *and* Wal-Mart–beset thruway that streaks past Escanaba's western edge. Largely underdeveloped when I was a child, Lincoln Road has now made Main Street a pale mercantile ancillary. A number of Main Street's storefronts have been abandoned, with no one rushing in to fill the void. And I am devastated to see that Sayklly's Candy, a Main Street stalwart, has moved to a slick new shop right off Lincoln Road.

Not that Lincoln Road is a commercial dynamo. As Mike and I turn onto it, I am struck by a curious lack of entrepreneurial cunning. Every restaurant and strip mall has a sign, and beneath every sign is a glowing white marquee. Instead of festooning these marquees with some incentive to stop in, Escanaba's brightest business-owning lights have, almost to the one, opted for William Carlos Williams–like austerity. "Buffet," reads Country Kitchens's marquee. That of Elmer's Restaurant is comparatively encyclopedic: "Polish sausage, kraut." The marquee belonging to Suds N' Sun tanning salon, while informative, seems to address some grievous past oversight: "New tanning bulbs." Only Nanoseconds, a quick-stop, does much to bring meaningful tidings: "Marlboro Carton $21.58."

We take a spin by the new cineplex, where actual, profitable motion pictures are playing. As teenagers, Mike and I used to drive two hours to the nearest big city—this was Green Bay, Wisconsin—hungry for escape. Only there could we see *Reservoir Dogs* or *Malcolm X*, since all Escanaba's moribund theater had to offer was *The Exorcist III* or *Rocky V*, coins after its opening weekend. As teenagers, Mike and I special-ordered *Life of Brian* from Southside Video, whose uniquely crappy selection of slasher flicks we'd exhausted, but one pass by the new Blockbuster reveals unending walls of videos and DVDs.

After I left Escanaba, I felt some dignity that I had come of age far beyond the fallout of the cultural atom smasher. The movies I saw or albums I bought or, later, books I read were not much colored by the inducements of culture brokers. The pickings were slimmer, sometimes maddeningly so, and not always sophisticated, but I was never less than certain that I had picked them. This is what makes rural, small-town people so opinionated. Strong opinion is the necessary attendant of choice, however limited, while fashion is the bootlick of exacting coercion.

If I were growing up in Escanaba now, Amazon.com would happily suggest which books or compact discs to buy. With America Online I could chat with people as far away as Newark or Portland, erasing the demarcations of isolation, a visible suburbanite to a vast, invisible city. The Movie People have come to capture Escanaba's isolation, which exists, still, in every empty street and darkened storefront, but it is an isolation that is, increasingly, identical to that of a thousand towns just like it. All of them are attuned to the same cultural pulsar, distant as it is familiar, as relentless as it is indifferent.

INT. ROSY'S DINER – MORNING

While driving to today's shoot, I find that the Movie People have closed off several blocks of Main Street. A small crowd of Escanabans stands at the barricade, shaking their heads in outrage. One would like to point out to these furnaces of rural anger that driving a single block north will grant them passage to wherever it is they wish to go, but one also knows this is not the point. Routine in small towns is not ruptured lightly. Repetition may indeed kill the soul, but it also affords the numb comfort of recognition.

I park and walk down Main Street to Rosy's Diner, where I see that the Movie People's infestation has already taken root. I suddenly realize that I have not, as clearly as I can remember, ever before *walked* down Main Street. As a boy I dirt-biked the whole of Main Street almost daily, and as an adult I have driven down it thousands of times, but the slow-moving vista of its

IT'S 10:00 P.M. AND MAIN STREET IS EMPTY, THE STOPLIGHTS SET ON HYPNOTIC YELLOW BLINK. ESCANABA SEEMS VAGUELY UNWELL.

storefronts and clean sidewalk slabs is disassociating in a revelatory way. *No one* walks in Escanaba. Ever. No doubt this bears some relation to the astonishing fatness of many of its citizens, to say nothing of the cold menace of its boredom. It is virtually impossible to grow bored while walking. No form of locomotion offers its solace. And yet, I am an Escanaban back in Escanaba, and after walking a distance shorter than the one from my front stoop to my subway stop I find myself wondering why the Movie People have blocked off so fucking *much* of Main Street.

Rosy's Diner is a small, sensationally yellow building found a few doors down from the bank where my father works – the kind of place that serves Coke in glass bottles and where lunch for two rarely vaults into double digits. During the grim summer following my early withdrawal from the Peace Corps, my father and I ate lunch here every day and tried to figure out what I would do with my life. I arrive at Rosy's to find the Movie People adjusting the set's lighting.

"Wait," one gaffer tells another, after placing a light. "This one'll be dangerously close to be-

that he will, finally, wrest from his overworked script and unappealing star something with which the declining remains of his conscience can abide.

Behind me, Tom Spiroff stands in the kitchen, talking to a *Detroit Free Press* reporter. He will later be quoted as saying: "I'm completely confident we're making a movie any studio is going to want to distribute. . . . The novelty is these Yoopers, who are a special breed of people you haven't seen in movies before."

"Last looks, everybody!" Gary hollers. Tom and the reporter break off their conversation. A subterranean silence falls within Rosy's. The second assistant director snaps his slate. Daniels nods in a deep, comprehending way. Gary yells "Action!"—a moment-specific imperative, like "Charge!" or "Full speed ahead!" that no human being could ever tire of being paid to shout.

They shoot the scene—three hunters talking—several times. Movie People really *do* say things like, "That was perfect. Let's do it again." Between takes, a hard-bitten elderly woman standing to my left asks me, "Do I have to yell out 'Flash!' if I'm taking a picture?" She is clearly a native Escanaban, and I wonder how she has bypassed the wranglers whose job it is to keep Escanabans off the set. I whisper that I don't think flash photography is allowed during filming. She then asks, "Is that man in the chook from Escanaba?" Since the man in the "chook" is an actor, I feel confident telling her no. "Is Jeff here?" she whispers. I fix her with a long, icy stare. When the takes are completed, Daniels walks over and introduces the hard-bitten elderly woman to the *Detroit Free Press* reporter.

She is the owner of a deer camp the Movie People are using for exterior shots. I now feel like a jackass and compound this by eavesdropping on the woman's subsequent interview. Her use of "Jeff" is not framed in grossly arriviste terms at all. She'd never heard of Daniels before the filming. The delighted *Free Press* reporter asks her if she ever thought her camp would be used in a motion picture. "Not really," she says.

I wander outside to see Tom Spiroff valiantly holding up his conversational end with a stout Escanaban and his young son. The man talks animatedly of just about everything. Tom remains heartrendingly kind, even after his responses have fallen to a take-me-to-your-leader tonelessness. "Really," he says. "Huh," he says. The man sallies forth into some new topic, and I can sense the psychic battle being waged behind Tom's faceplate. I *will* be nice. I . . . *will* . . . be *nice*. This is another skirmish in the undeclared emotional war between Escanaba and the Movie People. The Movie People, so far, have been regarded in Escanaba as surprisingly courteous. "Good, normal folks," one person told me. But they are not normal folks. They are making a movie, one of the

ore abnormal endeavors a group of human be
gs can undertake. One senses that Tom knows
nat the smallest lapse with this Escanaban will
oison the garden of friendly relations he has as-
duously pruned. One senses fur-
ner that Tom also knows, and
etests, how unfair a burden it is
have to disprove the negative
f Movie People's reputed base-
ess to an entire town twenty-
our hours a day.

Here two selves stand in naked
onfrontation, the Small-Town
elf and the Hollywood Self,
ach severed from its context,
ach forced to create a new, pre-
arious reality. For the Escana-
an, this reality holds that, al-
hough he is impressed with
om, he is not overwhelmed by
im, and by enjoying with him
verday conversation he will al-
ow this Hollywood movie pro-
ucer a respite from the fakery he believes makes
p Tom's world. For Tom, the reality is defen-
ve and turns back on itself, a metaphysical hair-
in that actually *forces* him to portray the normal,
iendly person he is. Having to concentrate, in in-
eraction after interaction, on being oneself must
e ontological hell, and I catch a sudden glimmer
f why so many famous people lose their minds.

I simply cannot bear to watch any more of
his, and hurry away.

FILMING ON ESCANABA'S MAIN STREET

"In some ways," John Clayton writes in *Small Town Bound*, a primer on abandoning the toxic urban lifestyle, "moving a small town is like moving to a foreign coun-
y. . . . Compared to your old neighbors, these
ople really are different. . . . A slip-up may be
stly. Despite the best of intentions, your state-
ents or actions . . . may send the wrong message,
d you'll find yourself disliked. . . ." Even for a
oster like Clayton, the small town is ineffably
e Other, in the pomo "Shakespeare and the
ther" sense of the word. Some of Clayton's
nters ("If you truly have a secret that ab-
lutely nobody should know, then tell absolutely
body") read like transcriptions from a coun-
rintelligence manual; others ("your brash New
rk sales technique may offend reticent dairy
rmers") come off as deconstructions of *New
rker* cartoons. But in the face of lifestyle de-
mpression, Clayton is optimism's archangel.
nall-town folk may at first be unsophisticated
d a little frightening, he assures, but by obey
g draconian rural protocol and (the implication
clear) not expecting very much, you will soon
come a welcome member of the community.

Clayton's evidence gathering in the cause of *Small Town City* will be greeted by many with-
out skepticism. Most Americans, after all, don't
live in small towns but in suburbs or micropoli-
tan "edge cities," such as those outside of Phoenix, Houston, and Atlanta. Whether hated, loved, mourned, or celebrated, the small town is, to those who do not live in one, an alternate uni-
verse whose values fall hideously short or glori-
ously surpass those of their referents. Many of our stumping politicians speak plangently of their small-town origins, while most mass entertain-
ments prefer a more cynical vision of small-town life. However small towns are portrayed, they are never Now, and they are never You.

For browbeaten city-dwellers whose rural flight needs more coddled guidance than the bromides of *Small Town Bound*, there is Norman Crump-
ton's *The 100 Best Small Towns in America*. Crampton ranks small towns according to their "uniqueness" and "quality." His complicated for-
mula involves average income, percentage of nonwhites, crime rate, and local government spending on education, among other brow-wrin-
kling concerns. Communities like Belmont, South Carolina, and Provincetown, Massachusetts, with their singular mission of providing summer hous-
ing for millionaires and sucking money out of tourists, score highly in Crampton's playoff. Of the thousands of anti-Provincetowns lacking the restorative power of boutique art and agreeable so-
cioeconomics, Clayton's boosterism shows its un-
pleasant Janus face. "The good small towns are booming," he writes. "The bad ones are dying."

Clayton would toe-tag my home town in an instant. Escanaba offers its citizens almost noth-
ing appreciable to outsiders beyond a stagnant local economy and community theater. Despite this, a good chunk of each graduating class hangs around. Every year enough old high-school ac-
quaintances migrate back from Milwaukee or De-

trout to give vague misgivings to those of us with [illegible] leave—then subsequently bore to tears your new [illegible] Indeed, when I was younger I felt certain that what kept small-town people in their small towns [illegible]

My stridency was fortified by American literature's constellation of small-town exiles. Willa Cather, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, and Sherwood Anderson all wrote [illegible] Hemingway, typically, chose silence, not once writing about Oak Park, Illinois. Fitzgerald seemed to [illegible] Lewis horsewhipped American small [illegible] *Main Street* and *Babbitt*. Lewis horsewhipped American small [illegible] Anderson is the most influ- [illegible] famously coining the term "grotesques" for small-



[illegible] called the "Up *Yours*, Winesburg" tradition in [illegible] for several years yet still find [illegible] Indians away [illegible]

pect themselves to be. This is why many small [illegible] and why many small [illegible] hair. One never risks the spur of true rejection [illegible]

[illegible]

On my way out the door for the last day o location filming, my father asks wher the Movie People are shooting today. I tel him where "we" are shooting and, while drivin to the set, marvel at my unthinking use of th first-person plural. My self-election to the parlia ment of moviemaking is not star-fucking solipsisr as much as it is an involuntary submission to th production's incorporating nature. But displace ment comes fast in its wake, for when one's tow is incorporated into another reality, one's ver identity succumbs to the resultant vortex.

Today the Movie People are filming in North town, Escanaba's economically depressed distric In perfect storybook synchronicity, the division be tween Northtown and its flusher counterpar Southtown, is the long stretch of Main Stree Since Escanaba lacks any minority presenc Northtowners and Southtowners are forced t dislike each other. I am from Southtown. Wor yet, I grew up on its tonicst street, Lake Sho Drive, a descendant of an *ancien régime* Escanal family whose kingly house overlooks the city pa and the oceanic glory of Lake Michigan. Nortl town, I am saying, makes me uncomfortable a conspicuous in the narcissistic and probably d luded way a straight person feels in a room of h mosexuals.

Today's scene takes place at Reuben's hous where he attempts détente with his unhappy wif Despite the fact that it is the coldest day of filn ing yet, with a savage temperature not unlike th of the moon's solar lee side, a fairly large group Escanabans has materialized to watch the filmin and been corralled into a line across the stree Gary Goldman, in his ever present sunglasses a white ball cap, paces up and down the sidewa while talking into his cell phone.

Two large production trucks pull up and a gingerly emptied of equipment. One guy, load with an armful of walkie-talkies, calls alms: "C your red-hot walkies!" Moviemaking might the only occupation without potential lethal that encourages such rampant walkie-talkie u Several of the gaffers and grips are wearing Ho buttons on their jackets. Even thou they are busy, this inspires me to strike up sor conversation. For just about all of them, this fi their first "feature" experience, though ma have done production work in commercials a public service announcements. They are counti Dame's success no less keenly than Dame [illegible] Hans, is working his way throu

mmunity college in Lansing at the entrance of a
anufacturer. I am about to ask whether they
ly love Escanaba when I see an old high school
end, Doug, talking with Daniels's stand-in.
Doug is Mike's cousin. He is also the only per-
n I know who has been shot for non-geopolitic
l reasons, taking an accidental bullet in the leg
hile deer hunting a few years ago. Doug's tenant
is shattered, and he walks with a noticeable
mp. Doug, I learn, has signed onto the film as its
un Safety Consultant. I congratulate him on his
g, and he regales me with amused but not at all
eam-spirited stories of the Movie People's in-
ocence in things ungulate.
The Movie People arrived with the thought of
ing a tranquilized farm deer for the hunting
enes. But a tranquilized farm deer proved dif-
lt to procure. A mechanical deer was thus ob-
ined from the local branch of the Department
Natural Resources, a notion so oxymoronic I
oon at the thought of it. Why, I ask, does the
NR have a mechanical deer? "To catch poach-
s," Doug replies. Robot deer are patrolling the
rests of Upper Michigan, and clearly I am here
vering the wrong story.
A couple approaches the set with a mixture of
epidation and privilege. They are, it is quickly
termined, the owners of the house that a whole
op of Movie People are recklessly stomping in-
and out of. I ask the woman, Michelle, if she's
rried about her home. She's not, she tells me,
rking a little as the screen door bangs shut for the
tieth time. "They gave us excellent insurance."
A stressed-looking Jeff Daniels is talking to a
meraman about (what else) lighting the
iveway-parked pickup truck he'll be sitting in for
e duration of this scene. Daniels's costar, the un-
irly beautiful Kimberly Norris Guerrero, most fa-
ous for an appearance on *Seinfeld*, waits nearby
ith her unfairly handsome significant other.
niels climbs into the cab of the battered Ford,
d Guerrero takes her place at the driver's-side
ndow. Both suffer eleventh-hour preening at the
nds of a makeup artist. Their conversation will
st be shot from Daniels's perspective, and
assed on the Ford's passenger side is a platoon
Movie People: the cameraman, the second as-
tant director, some gaffers, and the condenser
ic operator, each frozen in a differently un-
mfortable pose. Providing further distraction
the lights, all perched on thin metal stands
led "lollipops," and a huge white deflector that
embles the screen upon which children are lo-
tomized by elementary-school filmstrips. Be-
ath this sensory ambush, Guerrero and Daniels
now expected to have a quiet, character-re-
ding conversation. One does not need to see
eir awkward initial takes to grasp how ludi-
usly difficult motion picture acting can be.
The Movie People will try to use as much re-
tive sound as they can, but the [illegible] production could have a response to [illegible] extremely important. Gary, the [illegible] the crowd, that everyone keep very, very quiet and very, very still while the cameras are rolling. The crowd is a cooperative of nods. Gary walks back over to the Movie People side of the street where he motions to a production assistant carrying a bullhorn.

A bullhorn-enhanced voice fills the air: "All right, everybody. No walking. Quiet, please." Although I am standing at least twenty feet away, the block is wrecked with such silence I can hear Guerrero and Daniels's conversation per-

A TRANQUILIZED DEER WAS HARD TO FIND. A MECHANICAL ONE WAS THUS OBTAINED FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

fectly. Noah, the sound mixer, a lanky, long-haired young man in a white Irish sweater, sits nearby at his portable digital audio recorder, monitoring the sound levels through his headphones and minutely adjusting the console's numerous pots. Noah looks pleased until a neighborhood dog begins barking. The dog barks, in fact, through the entire take and stops, with mysterious precision, the instant the take is complete. Gary motions for another bullhorned edict for silence, and Guerrero and Daniels begin anew. Five seconds in, the dog is at it yet again. Noah's eyes roll skyward, Gary is now helplessly scanning the neighborhood, and the production assistant is brandishing his bullhorn in a way that leaves little doubt of its canine-bludgeoning potential. When the dog's tireless larynx has spoiled the third take, another production assistant is sent on a door-to-door scour of the neighborhood.

A few minutes later, the production assistant, smiling and a little shaken, returns. The dog's owner has been confronted. Unfortunately, the man is not one of Northtown's finer citizens. This is not surprising, since finding an adult male at home at eleven o'clock on a Tuesday morning is a rather flagrant hallmark of deliberate unemployment. The man was unmoved by the production assistant's request that his dog be taken inside during the filming. The production assistant wisely [illegible] decided to leave it at [illegible] and after every take the [illegible] suggested that perhaps the bullhorn [illegible] Pavlovian trigger.

A fourth take is attempted [illegible] bullhorn. A weird, fretful aura descends upon the production. No one—not Gary, not Noah, not the crew, not the crowd [illegible]—is turning to anything but this immaculate, fragile quiet. The dog's

twittering of birds all around us seems as raucous

erated by an inability to distinguish between the

and Guerrero, wholly alone in the temple of art,

unusable by an inopportune car horn coupled with a rotten muffler. Several takes, in fact, suffer invasion by questionable mufflers. After what twenty seconds of human interaction without

By now a small cadre within the crowd has

wraparound Oakley sunglasses, and shiny vinyl jackets with the names of local bars splashed

these men much attention, though some members

the Ford pickup's starboard side to that of its

his cell phone again, probably thrilled

truculent men, I re-

s triumph.

Great variety. Yet I know that, for most of the

with all kinds of apprehension, foremost of which

that these sneering Escanabans embod, an ex-

inversion of that same desire. Why, then, do

these men with such sudden intensity? Po-

haps because they remind me of the sad actua-

ties of small-town life, its dark filigree of loneline.

Lord Acton's aphorism that exile is the nursery

nationality is utterly mistaken. Exile is the nu-

ery of amnesia, a riddance of one's graceless prov-

cialisms, and no heart is softened quicker th-

that of the returning prodigal.

The lives of the laughing Escanabans are

too difficult for me to imagine. Their cars h-

shitty mufflers. They are smokers, drinkers, thr-

romantic and occupational histories Iliads of w-

No doubt they have "some college." No doub-

they've swabbed enough aircraft carrier deck-

have decided that Escanaba isn't so bad after a-

These upper midwestern lukes and Kallikaks

in a culture that despises them, consume enti-

tainment produced by people who mock the-

and it is suddenly hard to fault their powerl-

laughter at a film in which they will find no r-

resentation, not even as tough-talking redne-

deodorized by horse-sense philosophy.

I realize, then, that this film is not intended

these men. Or for Escanaba. Or for any sm-

town. It is meant, instead, for that know-noth-

American monstrosity, the target audience

though I understand the pressurized financ-

contingencies that make this necessary, I do n-

at this moment, much care. Loyalty is the sm-

town's blood, and assault from without is its tra-

fusion. I work myself into such a peckish lati-

it occurs to me only gradually that I am a pote-

tial bull's eye in that target audience. My own p-

vate Escanaba shares some crucial denominat-

with the Movie People's: both are vessels of st-

ic triumph over the inadequate past, both

backlash, the glow of the recoverable, and b-

acquittal memories. Our Escanabas exist

do not remain.

I abruptly thank the Movie People for hav-

me and walk back to my father's truck. At

Second Avenue I look back. Stands of ancient esca-

have been cleared and the trees themselves are

temporary and unstable. One of the Movie People

"Didn't quite work out, eh?" she calls to me

me my name for the film. "Movie People!"

don't think it'll even be any good."

"Hey, I'm only working part-time. I think it will

Her look of cruel amusement seems

Jaspers and Wonder Bread, and I'm still wearing

Bad." Yes, I think.

PICTURES AT AN EXTERMINATION

A child of Hollywood encounters Auschwitz, and himself

By Leslie Epstein



CALIFORNIA

Last summer, during the century's final ally, I traveled ith my wife to uschwitz. I had ot been to any of ne camps before nd was filled with epidation by this sit to the site of hat Churchill called the greatest ime in history. I had two particular ars. The first was the adequacy of my sponse. The closest I had come to he Holocaust was the year I spent at te Yivo Library, then at Fifth Avnue and Eighty-sixth Street, doing search for a novel on the Lodz ghet-. The frightening aspect of that exerience was not the way my heart opped when confronted by a myriad afflictions but how it pumped all o callously along. It seemed that in der to get through these accounts of ffering, to be able to think about and shape them, I had drawn a psychic shutter between myself and the fate of the Jews. Once such an iron shield is deployed, however, it is not so easy to remove. All the horror I had labored to keep from my Holocaust novel, which in fact emerged with a certain lightheartedness, even friendliness, in its tone, now began to crowd the pages of my next book, which soon became filled with amputations, autopsies, disinterments, torture. Even the life I continued living became heavier, darker, flatter, and not-to-be-enjoyed. I had, it seemed, played an ironical trick on myself. I had made a pact with my emotions not to feel but had forgotten to set a date at which the arrangement would end. I was like the figure of legend who asks for immortality but neglects to request perpetual youth, or the man who puts on a mask he cannot remove, a parable for the plain fact that in time we all get the face we deserve. The very powers I had [illegible] for cleanness of mind, objectivity, control, became the source of my own malaise.

It mystified me at the time, and it mystifies me still, why I was reluctant to visit Auschwitz. The reason, I now think, was fear of what impact the camp would have on my memory. The first story I can remember writing, in the [illegible] grade of [illegible] University High School in Los Angeles, was set in South America. A crowd gathers in a public square to watch the next to-be-executed victim. Both in number and excitement. All faces are turned upward, to where a balcony juts from the third floor of a palace. Finally a door is flung open and a small figure, dressed in brown, strides toward the railing. His

Leslie Epstein is the author of the novel King of the Jews *and, most recently, the book of stories* [illegible]

I [illegible] POSSIBLE THAT MY FATHER MIGHT HAVE NOTICED
SOMETHING HIDDEN IN THOSE WARTIME FILMS'
GIVENS: CHIMNEYS, YELLOW STARS'

Blonde, *Casablanca*, and dozens more. By the mid-Thirties, when Phil and Julie arrived in Hollywood, the men who ran the studios had decided upon such a stringent policy of ethnic cleansing that throughout the whole of the Second World War the words "Jewish" and "Jew" appeared in not a single film set in the States (with the exception, it pleases me to say, of the Epstein Boys' Mr. *Skeffington*). I suppose it is not surprising that the words were rarely spoken in my family either. If Julie and Phil were busily creating the American dream in, say, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, their children had no choice but to join the great universal audience of white, upturned, homogeneous faces that made up the home front of American culture.

When I came back to the question of how I knew [illegible] Holocaust, Hitler [illegible] appearance at the end of any [illegible] is possible that [illegible] I must have noticed something [illegible] films? I heard a few whispered remarks [illegible] I had glimpsed either in [illegible] the pictures that preceded [illegible] and I had heard [illegible] mountain of corpses, the surviving [illegible]

The truth is, I had always known—in the same way that everyone knows, from childhood on, the laws of gravitation. What goes up must come down. From childhood I might have been born with an intuitive grasp of the fate of the Jews. What we learn later, the formulas for the mass of objects and the square of their distance, only confirms what we carry within us like the weight of our bones. Hints, hushings, inflections: these pass by a kind of psychic osmosis from child to child and from Jew to Jew. I have not mentioned one more thing that may account for the *gravitas* of my first piece of fiction. My laughing father had died less than a year before I wrote a word.

I have always believed that every writer's true subject matter is essentially a transformed version of the earliest years of his life. Freud gives the example of E.T.A. Hoffmann, who claimed that all his images and metaphors came from a single journey in a post chaise, while "still a babe at his mother's breast." In other words, one's vision and voice emerge from what has always been unconscious or what has become repressed. For reasons I cannot fully grasp, I have, from that first story on, spent my career conjuring the Holocaust, not out of thin air then from mere images, mere words. I have a friend, a famous Holocaust writer, who refuses to write his autobiography—a true tale of this century, a child saved by Gypsies, horse thieves, prostitutes, criminals, while everyone else in the world attempted to kill him—because he fears that the unearthing of the facts will destroy his fiction. Now I was about to see actual barbed wire and barracks, gas chambers, the ovens. To what extent this was the fear that haunted me—would these hard facts overwhelm my childhood and deflate those imaginings?

VIENNA

On the way to Auschwitz [illegible] and I stopped in Vienna, which I had last visited exactly forty years before, in the summer of 1959. On that occasion, fresh from Vincent Skully's [illegible]



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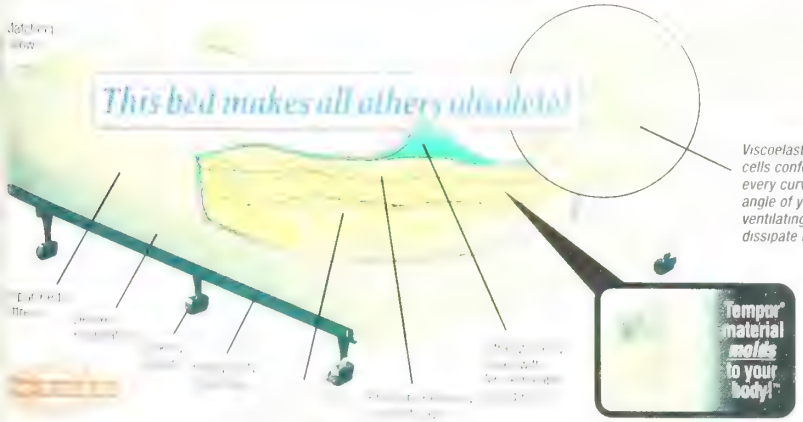
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skin, the pads of feet, the poor penises, and, above all, the revolving exhibit of deformed fetuses, pin-headed, flat headed, or with no head at all—that this was the tradition of Mencke, too.

Compared to the elbowing crowds at the *Kopernicusplatz*, the Kunsthistorisches Museum was oddly empty. What few visitors there were tended to collect in the room with the Breughels, though I was the only one to stop before the *Bethlehemitischer Kindermord*. There were plenty of corpses here too, all of them children. The snow-covered rooftops and snow-filled streets, the horsemen with spears and axes, were more reminiscent of Bruges and Antwerp than any village of the Middle East. But the greatest sense of dislocation, in time as well as space, was created by the way the eye was drawn backward, inward, upward, past the crowds of wailing women, the romping dogs and patient horses, past the babe in swaddling at the center—a contra-nativity, an anti-manger—and past the soldiers who block escape to the rear, all the way to the sturdy Flemish church. The point is that this catastrophe belongs not to the sixteenth century and not to the Roman era but to every epoch. Certainly such roundups have occurred in my lifetime on the great avenues, the Karntnerstrasse, the Operngasse, the Geteidemarkt, outside this museum, and in the streets of Lodz, Lublin, Lvov. The same doors were battered down as in this painting, surely a similar father begged and somewhere a mother, unbalanced by the stiffening corpse across her knees, adjusted an earring. Look: there is even a besieged official who [illegible] *what can I do?* The only difference between the massacre of the innocents in Bethlehem and that in twentieth-century Europe is that Herod murdered only children under the age of two.

On the metro, before our departure from Vienna, Horace and I stopped off at the Freud Museum, Berggasse 19, with [illegible] Street and 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, the most famous of addresses. Here, in the rooms where Freud lived and worked, were his couch, his antiquities, the photos of colleagues and kin, as well as of Judand Lün, the family chows. A pen holder, a hairbrush, a deck of cards. Everywhere were photographs of Freud himself, smooth-shaven and bearded, bespectacled and not, with and without cigar—steadily growing older, turning into the archetype of the father figure that has dominated much of the thought of the twentieth century. He has been just such a figure for me as well, not merely as wielder of authority but by the way he became linked in my mind with the Epstein Boys through the common exercise of what I should probably not call their Jewish wits.

To explain: photograph number 265 at the Sigmund Freud Haus depicts the facade of Berggasse 19 with a swastika hanging over the front door. I knew that the premises had been looted several times by the S.S. and that Freud's daughter, Anna, had been arrested and held by the police for a day. Before Freud could obtain his exit visa ("The enchantment of the new surroundings," he wrote to Max Eitingon upon his arrival in England, makes "one want to shout *Heil Hitler!*") he was forced to sign a declaration to the effect that he had been correctly treated by the German authorities and allowed to work in freedom. Freud signed, with the proviso that to the preparatory statement he could add a single sentence: "I can heartily recommend the Gestapo to anyone."

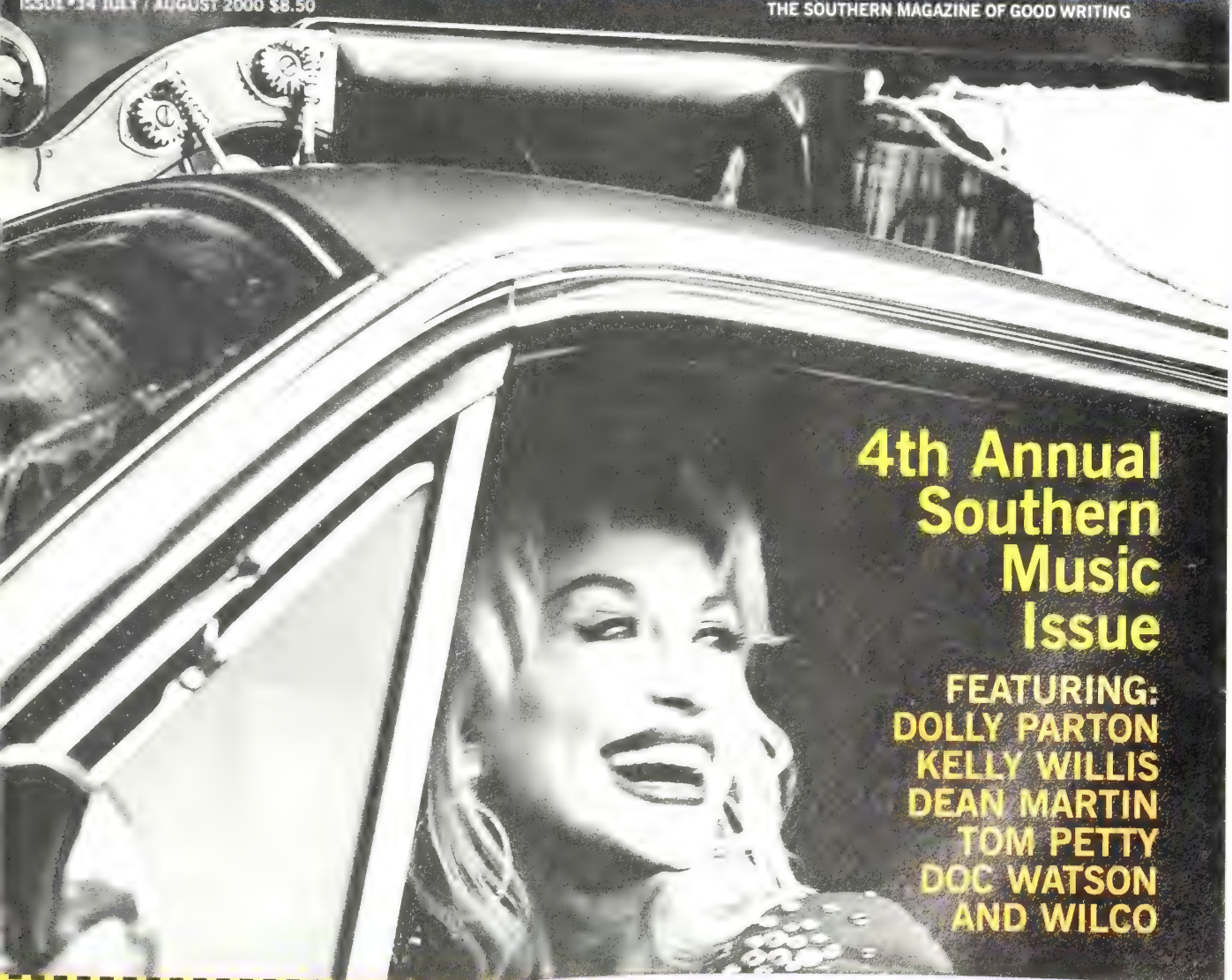
When in 1947 Jack Warner testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee, he produced a ludicrous list of subversives, consisting primarily of those with whom he had contractual disputes. It included Philip and Julius J. Epstein. ("Those guys," said Warner, "are always on the side of the underdog.") Not long afterward J. Parnell Thomas, then chairman of HUAC, sent the two a two-part questionnaire. Question one: *Have you ever been a member of a subversive organization?* Question two: *What was that organization?* To part one the boys dutifully answered, "Yes." To part two they

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I

I, then aged thirteen, did

stolen

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Was

peet that

his

CROSSES

We drove the

metres from Gate

Oświęcim by car.

bleeding hearts. In the

wire twisted into a crown of thorn

Auschwitz (which followed

and nun, have been turned

er victims was given the

an martyr but because she

and remained, a Jew.

for the cross before which John

II had celebrated the mass that—

it was held at Birkenau, be

lion Poles," not Jews—marked

and fully visible from within it.

can rabbi stormed the walls

...nvent both to uproot the cross and ...demand the departure of the nuns. ...hen I read of that event in far-off ...lassachusetts I found myself not only ...rshing the rabbi—his name was ...vraham Weiss—Godspeed but re...etting that I was not there, whether ...n caftan or striped pajamas, to aid ...m in his task.

It's been a long time, apparently, ...nce "Onward, Christian Soldiers." ...fy conversion had little to do with ...eligion, if anything, it was bound up ...ith the absence of faith in my life. ...ad I been raised differently, with a ...rmulke, say, instead of the red-...nd-white cap of the Pacific Coast ...eague Hollywood Stars, I feel cer...ain I would have rebelled against ...adaism in any form. But neither ...abbi Weiss nor any of his brethren ...ould be pleased by what rushed in ...o fill the vacuum. For I am one of ...any who have made the more or ...ss conscious decision not to allow ...he kindness of America to accom...lish what the long line of killers ...om Haman to Hitler could not. It ...as bad enough that the Polish gov...rnment had once tried to efface the ...fferings of its own citizens (when I ...eard that the mayor of Warsaw had ...on a wager that he could dedicate ...he Ghetto Memorial without once ...entioning the word "Jew," I decid...d to write the whole of my Holo...aust novel without once writing the ...ord "German"); but the idea that ...he Church now sought to de-Ju...ize the very spot that its teachings ...d helped to create was not to be ...rne.

If Paul had remained Saul (how ...ar people change their names ...ook, kid, the people are gonna find ...t you're a Jew sooner or later," ...k Warner told another Julie, ...arfinkle-Garfield, "but better lat...") and if Constantine the Great ...d never hallucinated a cross in the ...y—that is, if the religion of Jesus ...d remained a minor sect and not ...come a major heresy—the Holo...aust could not have occurred. The ...ws have lived in Asia as long as ...ey have in Europe, and I am not ...ware of a single one who was killed ...cause he was not a Hindu or Sufi ...even a Turk. But those were not ...ocolate eggs that the folk of Eu-

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F	L	E	E	S	K	D	E	S	E	C	R	A	T	E
I	I	E	S	H	I	I	T	E	S	V	I	T	U	S
J	E	R	O	M	E	E	U	N	T	G	A	I	T	S
I	S	S	U	E	R	N	I	C	E	R	N	S	U	E
S	T	Y	L	I	S	T	S	E	R	A	S	M	U	S

NOTES FOR "PROTECTION RACKET"

[illegible]

[illegible]

Across: 1. [illegible] 12. [illegible] 21. [illegible] 23. [illegible] 25. [illegible] 31. [illegible] 33. [illegible] 34. [illegible] 35. [illegible] 38. [illegible] 41. [illegible] 42. [illegible] 45. [illegible] 49. [illegible] 51. sty-lists.

Down: 1. [illegible] 2. [illegible] 3. [illegible] 4. [illegible] 5. [illegible] 6. [illegible] 7. [illegible] 8. [illegible] 9. [illegible] 10. [illegible] 11. hidden; 16. hidden; 18. d(ancer)-rat; 24. I-tendering*; 28. U-result-in*; 32. [illegible] 39. [illegible] 40. [illegible] 41. [illegible] 43. [illegible] 44. [illegible] 45. [illegible].

Accursed, indeed. For I do not

under compulsion, still longing for a nature that was animated, a god on

unnatural!

n demanded; and

to the skull of the

he means is

saw nude

witz II, and

limbs, metal

as it was without any other property,

I, Ilene and I found our-

pris-

cross with which John Paul had ce-

moved from Birkenau. The nu

providentially, were gone. I co

well off in the distance. Perhaps I

it, perhaps because it stood in

center of a sunken garden, the cr

seemed smaller than its twenty-

feet and less imposing than I h

tented. More highly I had been co

tioned by what I had already seen

am not referring to the hundreds

photographs (how I learn

Cieskawa Kwoka, aged thirteen,

her off-center hat) of murdered Po

or to the dungeons in which scor

of them had been forced to

back to back, but rather to a sm

cell. That was where a resistance

fighter, Lt. Stefan Jasienski, P

been held for execution. Let me

if you had seen the crude calen

the simple marks, by which

counted his remaining days,

seen among them the scratch

cross, two perpendicular lines, wh

which he had comforted himself,

would you not—and would you rt

Avraham Weiss—be moved tow

a certain charity, too? Tolerance

its logic. If we allow this prisoner

cross, Rabbi, must we not also g

his co-religionists whatever solace

hope, they might derive from

large one that stands at the

of the sunken garden."

TREES

To visit Auschwitz is

escapably to subject one

is why I believe

cognitive dissonance. One sta

must begin

miss thoughts of the next day's

—if, the start of what may be

things, and what more

have

times. To Birkenau, close

was said that

the same

Jews, it was particularly difficul

attend to the claims of the d

through the pulsebeat of what

mained so insistently alive. The

roughly blue. Wildflowers wave

tumbled by. So did white mo

nd zigzagging bees. Cicadas, lo-
sts, crickets—a Jew does not know
e names of such things—made a
in, paused, then a burr. Thus en-
mpassed we began our tour.

What we saw first was the rail
ur, whose tracks veer straight
rough the infamous gatehouse, the
e with the roofed tower at its cen-
r. From that perch we looked out
er either another planet or what
s been described as the anus of
is one, acre after acre of chimneys,
ousands it seemed, each in an or-
rly Germanic row. These were
hat were left of the barracks that
d been plundered at war's end by
les who wished to rebuild their
vn homes with the wood. Follow-
g the tracks, we came to the flat
ab of concrete that had been the
nloading platform for the trans-
ort. Here was where Mengele
wed his finger left, and the elder
and ill, the children and their
others, went at once to the crema-
riums; right, and the able-bodied
re marched off to be shaved and
sinfected and made ready for the
ork that would either kill them
traight or, together with diet and
sease and the abuse they bore, so
duce their physical and moral en-
gies that they, too, would soon be
el for the ovens.

Now the platform was deserted;
deed, the whole vast expanse of
rkenau had hardly any visitors—
e for two blond-headed children,
in boys, who jumped in play from
ncrete to rusted rail and back.
turally enough, I thought of their
e had Mengele greeted them on
s spot. I thought, too, of my own
n sons; of Ilene, herself a twin; of
e and Phil. Twins are a great
eme in my life, spanning three
nerations, making up much the
ater part of what to me is most
ar. Yet I contemplated these
aping boys with dispassion, exam-
ng them with the same bemused
erest that everyone takes in the
enomenon of the single egg that
s in two.

hat sense of dissociation. I ex-
ienced it as a kind of dumbness—
ved with me as I walked on,
lough grasses and ferns (daisies,
re they? Corny forget-me-nots?
Jews do not know the names of flow-
ers either) from site to site. I paused
two of the crematoriums—disrobing
rooms, gas chambers, ovens—that
had been blown to pieces, one of
them by the Sonderkommando in a
desperate act of revolt. To me they
were no more than pits filled with
rubble. Nor was the memorial, a se-
ries of grand, if not grandiloquent,
rectangular shapes, more affecting.

[illegible] I knew to be symbolic. I [illegible]
ested himself in the Holocaust, [illegible]
w [illegible] enlargement of one of
only two surviving photographs of
the Auschwitz Sonderkommando at
work. Across the entire lower mid-
ile ground lay a number of naked
corpses, some foreshortened, feet
forward, like Mantegna's Christ,
most jumbled together in an undif-

I EXAMINED THE ENLARGEMENT THAT HOVERED BEFORE ME,
JUST AS I HAD THE CIMABUES AND GRUNEWALDS, AND YES,
THE MANTEGNAS, AFTER MY COURSE IN THE HISTORY OF ART

The Communist government had
meant to build a "Monument of the
Martyrdom of the Polish Nation and
of Other Nations," and in its ab-
straction and facelessness—above all
in the way the Hebrew and Yiddish
plaques took their place as but two
among two dozen more—it succeed-
ed. I understood that it was outrageous to force the Jews to take their
place among "other nations," other
peoples, but much as I sought to
summon it, outrage, along with
every other emotion, remained be-
yond my grasp.

How did I come to be so well in-
oculated? Where was the fellow feel-
ing I had managed to muster for the
unfortunate Poles? Were these sights
too familiar? Had I dwelled so long
with imagery that I could no longer
respond to the material of real life? I
had feared the impact of this day on
my imagination, but I had assumed
the effect, if any, would be gradual
and show itself primarily in my
work. Now, trudging on, past
methane pits and the occasional
Star of David that marked a spot
where human ashes had been un-
earthed, I felt something like a re-
turn of the numbness—detachedness—
that had descended upon me two
decades before.

Then I looked up, surprised not
to be more accurate, *as the world*
startled, the way one is by a
Magritte painting in which a cloud-
filled canvas is superimposed upon
an actual sky. Directly before me, at
[illegible] enlarged, was [illegible]
I knew to be symbolic. [illegible]
ested himself in the Holocaust, [illegible]
w [illegible] enlargement of one of
only two surviving photographs of
the Auschwitz Sonderkommando at
work. Across the entire lower mid-
dle ground lay a number of naked
corpses, some foreshortened, feet
forward, like Mantegna's Christ,
most jumbled together in an undif-
ferentiated mass. Above them,
erect, stood five Jewish men, each
wearing a light shirt, dark trousers,
a cap. A sixth, at right, was bent
over, tugging at a body, trying to
dislodge it from the pile. At center,
two of the Sonderkommando
dragged a corpse by the arms to the
fiery pyre in the background. The
three remaining men stared down-
ward, as if to choose whom next to
throw to the flames. All are turned
away from the smuggled camera,
not unlike the gleaners in a Millet,
at work in the wheat. In the back-
ground five slender trees mimicked,
with their trunks, the upright men,
just as they still foliage—it must
have been summertime, probably
1944, when the ovens had been
overloaded—echoed the clouds of
smoke that billowed up and out
to the right, a line of movement
counterbalanced by the men, who
rose from right to left. For a brief
moment I examined the enlarge-
ment that hovered before me much
as I have here—here: five narrow
isosceles triangles, sky, trees,
smoke, men, the earthen fore-
ground—each segment in a different
direction, like pennants tossed in
the wind—and just as I did the
Cimabues and Grunewalds, and yes,
the Mantegnas, after my course in
the History of Art.

Then, oddly, the photograph
seemed to transform itself, to erase
itself as an image and become part
of a larger landscape from which

et in the panoram-
ed; and to my
their clothing for the showers they
well. With
it I realized that the trees I saw
But I could match
and branched in the
and, these
I climbed out of the
And in that glance the feelings I
author, had himself experienced,
all that I had
The

of the trees in the photograph had been matched by those that stood behind it, this building was mirrored by a identical structure that stood perhaps a hundred yards off—identical, I quickly grasped, but for two things: no tracks ran through its center, and there was a Christian cross at its top. This structure, which had once housed the SS and camp administrators, had been taken over by the citizens of the nearby town of Brzezinka. Living trees.' This was a living church! All the forbearance I had experienced in regard to the Poles and their religion vanished in an instant. I had no difficulty in feeling outrage now. This was, as Churchill had said, the epicenter of the greatest crime in history; but what he did not say, and what the presence of this triumphant cross all but denied, was that the Holocaust was just such a crime because it was committed exclusively against the Jews.

Exclusively? What of the Poles, whether intellectuals or churchmen? What of the Soviet soldiers? What of the Gypsies? I did not, in my moment of fury, forget or deny the innumerable sufferings of these people. Yet the fact remains that the Jews were hunted down for different reasons and with a different degree of thoroughness and intensity than [illegible] people at any place or at any time. No citizen of Poland—not Father Kolbe, not Lt. Jasienski, and not the sad and beautiful Czeskawa [illegible] thrust into Auschwitz [illegible] always a Pole. Whether resistance fighter, petty criminal, believer, or simply the object of a mistake, every such victim [illegible] the ultimate luxury: an explanation.

[illegible] what befell the Jews. In the first [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Which is to say that the Holo
ist was unique for only one rea
n: because the Jews are unique.
ieir singularity derives in part
m simply having lasted so long.
t is in various Native American
igions an aged boulder through
ose perseverance takes on a cer
n venerability and holiness. In
t, too, as I have already discussed,
Jews' entanglement with Chris
nity has marked them off from all
ier peoples. But it is not in rela
n to another religion so much a
their belief in their own that the
ws have shaped the nature of
estern thought. I do not know
ether or not the Jews have been
osen to be a light unto the na
ns; I do know that the nations
ve behaved toward the Jews with
at same animosity that darkness
ls toward light or that, in an im
I wish were my own, flour must
l toward the yeast that will not
ow it to subside.

And what is this yeast, so bub
ng, so insistent, so difficult to tol
te, but the force of imagination?
o not think it an exaggeration to
that the war of the Germans
inst the Jews was a war against
tain qualities of the Jewish mind,
l that, to twist the famous apho
n of Heine, before the mobs in
rlin and Munich and Dresden
uld burn the Jews they first had to
n their books. What is in these
ads and books that bedevils so
ny who come in contact with
m? I think the hated element is
continuous exercise of what Co
dge called the primary imagina
n: the "repetition in the finite
ad of the eternal act of creation
he infinite I am." It is the Jews
o took the imaginative leap of
nprehending, out of an empty
irlwind, a burning bush, the *I*
That I Am. It is the Jews who
stituted the story of Abraham
d Isaac for the reality of a father
ng a son and a son killing his fa
It in some measure Christianity
anged for a return to the original
n of sacrifice, it was German pa
sm that made that hidden wish
ct of life. And it is the Jews, too,
have maintained in their finite
ds a belief in the infinite, when

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[illegible] supreme fiction. [illegible] that was [illegible] become a rebuke [illegible] centers, their truth [illegible] possible [illegible] finite metrics, and all that [illegible] enthusiasm, had to be [illegible]

[illegible]

Irene and I boarded the [illegible] express Cracow–Warsaw, and some thirty hours later took off on a Cross Air flight to Zurich, there to connect to a plane direct to Boston. After only twenty [illegible] in the air the pilot informed those on the right side of the cabin that they could look down on the city of Lodz, the unnamed location of the Holocaust novel I had [illegible] decade before. I was [illegible] on the left, however. Nothing below but a patchwork [illegible] and tan and [illegible]. I plucked up the in-flight magazine, but, once again, all the letters were blurred. Tears? Not tears. Another migraine? By now I [illegible]. In just three weeks I [illegible] take another flight, this time to Los Angeles, where Uncle Julie, my father's replica, would be celebrating his ninetieth birthday.

[illegible] didn't. I suppose [illegible], since two years earlier he'd suffered a massive [illegible]. Julie flying eastward to be [illegible] the Penn State [illegible]. Since then [illegible] confined, often asleep, to [illegible] themselves ("I stick out my [illegible] and always [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

DEATH OF A NATION

Remembering Elijah Muhammad, True American

By *Anthony Walton*



iscussed in this essay

he Messenger: The Rise and Fall of Elijah Muhammad,
by Karl Evanzz. Pantheon Books, 1999. 667 pages. $28.50.
n Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad,
by Claude Andrew Clegg III. St. Martin's Press, 1997.
400 pages. $14.05.

In the eleventh chapter of Revelation, verse 19, we read, "God's sanctuary in heaven was opened, nd within his sanctuary was seen e ark of his covenant." This piece scripture was a foundation stone the theology, if it can be called ch, of a group of modern-day nostics known as Heaven's Gate, irty-nine of whose members comitted a very deliberate mass suicide the wealthy San Diego suburb of ancho Santa Fe on March 25, 97. The group was guided in this ton by its founder's belief—the under being Marshall Applewhite, ormer music professor who had named himself "Do"—that the en passing Hale-Bopp comet herled a spaceship (an *ark*) that uld sweep them off to the cosmos d true heaven. All they had to do s to shed their "containers," their lies.

One hesitates to call Heaven's Gate ult. One man's satanic cult, as we earlier this year in the George W. sh/Bob Jones University fiasco, is another man's Roman Catholic Church. The black tennis shoes of the Heaven's Gate followers, their shorn hair, their purple shrouds, and, ultimately, their deaths were marks of devotion, pure and simple, they paid a price for their beliefs that few of those Americans who wear business suits and take their families to church every Sunday would be willing to pay. It was *what* they died for, a mixture of bad science fiction and corrupted Christian theology, that was so scary, and so sad. They died, as Leon Wieseltier wrote at the time, for kitsch.

The Nation of Islam, until recently more often called the Black Muslims, is another group of extremist American believers whose belief system likewise comprises a kitschy mixture of bad science fiction and corrupted (in this case Islamic) theology. But the Nation, far from being a minor, if terrible, footnote, has played a significant part in the history of America in the twentieth century—in particular the history of African Americans. Led by "The Messenger," the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, and often associated with its two most famous members, Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali, the group blazed a trail of racial estrangement, deception, and violence through this country from 1930 through the 1990s. The Nation of Islam is still fighting for mainstream acknowledgment, an acknowledgment that was partially—and somewhat grudgingly—conferred upon its current leader, Louis Farrakhan, in 1995 for his prominent role in organizing the Million Man March on Washington.

The success of that march would seem to validate the Nation of Islam's stature in the African-American community, but the Nation's actual membership is—and always has

Anthony Walton is the author of Mississipp
An American Journey and the co-e
with Michael S. Harper of The Vin
Book of African American Poetry

Baldwin wrote in 1962, in *The Fire*

> [illegible] has [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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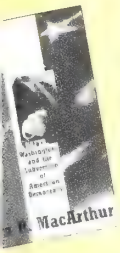


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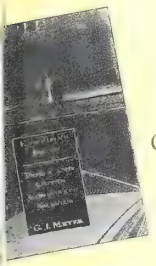


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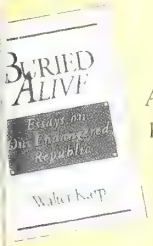
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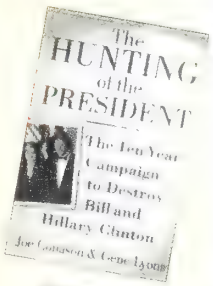
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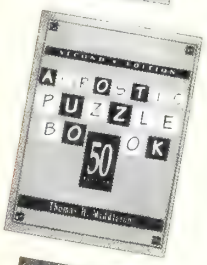




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name—without, in other words, l
leaves the story of Muhammad's l
of ascent. Although this was
the narrative quickly shifted to

When Elijah Poole arrived
Detroit, he worked
among other
He delved further into his religio
studies, continuing to comb the Bi
as he had done since childhood; he
so explored the life-guiding ideolog
groups such
United Negro Improvement Asso
was the pseudo-Islamic Moorish S
ence Temple of America, started
(né Timothy Drew), who by the ti
arrived in
Seaboard and in the Midwest
ligious leader." A small but grow
number of African Americ
Muslims. Elijah Poole attended,
impressed by, the rallies
nascent groups like Drew Ali's.

In 1931, Poole was to have
Having heard through acquaintan
"black man's religion," he attende
meeting of the "Nation of Isl
There he was overwhelmed
given by the nat
nced Far-rod) Mul
mad. At the end of the meetin
patiently waiting his turn in
Muhammad and asked gently,
are the one we read in the Bible
he would come in the last day u
the name Jesus. . . . You
Fard Muhammad nod
mnly in agreement. Po
that night certain
d finally found his destiny.
Fard Muhammad, who looke

K

particularly for the
s, in which Evans
"Elijah Muham-
the Treaty
only
ment

paid only glancing attention to the Black Muslims. As we learn from
most notably Muhammad's son and heir apparent, Wallace
ments.

Claude Andrew Clegg's An
Man is also well researched and is overall more tightly written than
the shadowy figure of Muhammad himself. Clegg, a professor of American history at Indiana University, began his research on Muhammad while writing his doctoral dissertation and he is deeply informed on the ins and outs of the group. He even pro-
manners of deceitful, treacherous, whites to maintain their dominance
Christianity, and technology—essentially all of Western civilization.)
underappreciated by,
ther impedi-

ws."
Muham-

v light like a white man, is believed the FBI to have been Wallace dd Fard, a hardened half-British, lf Indian ex-con and grifter out of w Zealand. His teachings, perhaps t surprisingly, ran counter to many the central tenets of orthodox Is-m. Presenting himself as the Mahdi, Muslim redeemer (a presumptuous-ss that would call for grisly execu-n in most Muslim countries), Fard uhammad filled Elijah Poole's head th the theology of the Nation. As anzz recounts: "He had, he said, as-med the physical features of a Cau-sian so as to be able to mingle easily nong whites; by living as a white an, he could keep abreast of their cret plans to eliminate all people of lor from the face of the earth."

In Fard's teaching, the first man on rth was black, this Original Man ilt great civilizations in Africa and nded the Holy City of Mecca. A negade scientist of this great em-re, "Mr. Yacub," began experiment-g around six thousand years ago th "breeding" technology, creating cult of followers who became hter and lighter: every third child rn naturally showed some trace of rown," and these children were ed with each other, while all black ildren were murdered at birth. er time, this proto-eugenics exper-ent yielded whites, a race of leached-out" devils whom Mal-m X described in his pre-orthodox slim days as "blond, pale-skinned, d-blue-eyed devils—savages, nude d shameless; hairy, like animals, v walked on all fours and they ed in trees." Yacub's race proved so moral they were exiled to Patmos, same island where the Apostle n received the book of Revelation dream.

White people, Fard taught, in ie became determined to destroy Africans, the "original people." greatest crime in history was the e trade, in which the whites, the ue-eyed devils," now the ascen-t race on earth thanks to their agery and tricknology, kidnapped lions of original people from the neland of Africa and brought m to North America, using the icans to build white civilization le doing anything within their power to degrade and humiliate this once proud tribe. Whites gave their captives a false religion, Christianity, separating them from the true God, Allah (again, it should be remembered, true orthodox Muslims abhor and reject this construction of Islam), and used blond-haired, blue-eyed Jesus and the rest to teach Africans to hate themselves and to become the most forlorn people on the face of the planet.

Imagine the sharecropper and failed autoworker Elijah Poole hearing this tale over dinner in his wretched apartment in Detroit in 1931, in the depths of the Depression. Imagine Fard Muhammad—con-man extraordinaire, with fifty-eight aliases known to the FBI—confiding to this black man lost in the city that Fard is Allah; imagine him telling Elijah Poole, who had already identified Fard Muhammad as the Redeemer he had been waiting for since childhood, that *Poole himself is the man who shall bring this message to the world*. Elijah Poole, of Sandersville, Georgia, became the Messenger, taking a new, "original" name—first Elijah Karriem and then, in 1933, Elijah Muhammad.

Before dismissing Fard's outlandish tales out of hand and writing Elijah Poole down as at best a fool for wanting to believe them, we would do well to consider Evanzz's description of the lynching of Poole's good friend Albert Hamilton, falsely accused of rape, an event that Poole witnessed when he was fifteen years old:

> "We're going to string you up, nigger," someone yelled as the crowd kicked and beat Hamilton and dragged him to "negro town." His punishment was meant to serve as another grim and wholly unnecessary warning about what happens when a black man is accused of touching a white woman. The mob continued to beat the boy while two men lassoed a huge tree branch. While terrified black residents peeped out of their windows at the goings-on, the badly bruised and now nearly unconscious suspect fell to his knees. The lynchers fixed the noose around Hamilton's neck and tightened it. An anxious group of volunteers pulled the opposite end of the rope up and tied

Fire for the M

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"Essential."

—*The Boston Globe*

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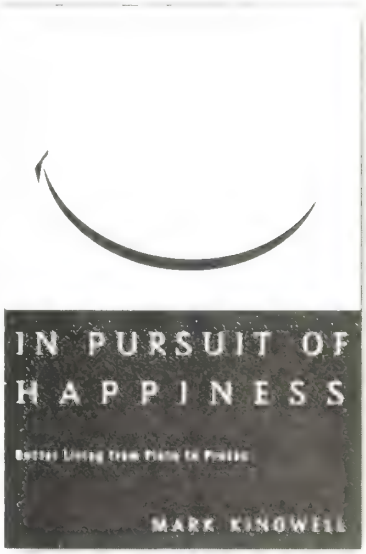
orthodox Islam into the United
ates, Muhammad Ali and Malcolm
ences on American culture of Eli-
Muhammad's movement. When
Ali publicly broke with Elijah
Muhammad in 1964, Ali remained
Muhammad, refusing ever to
mment on the assassination of his
mer "brother." But despite his de-
tion to the vision of his spiritual
cher," as reported by Clegg, "Ali
aintained elite outside the struc-
es of the movement." The fighter
rely and more partly broke
h Muhammad in the late Sixties,
d the fact that both favorite sons
ame estranged from the Nation is
Malcolm X's rupture, however, as
e more violent one, is also the
e significant. His story is the
ed: "I the lost lamb, the true
art; he was the hungry penitent,
king Ali's natural, ironic, and be-
ed distance from the events of his
When Malcolm was without
h, he was a devil beyond help or
demption; when he was a prisoner,
so viciously fought and battled the
ards and the other prisoners that
became known as "Satan"; when
joined the Nation, he prayed and
fied and challenged the status quo
a image of pure belief that was
htening, even to the other Black
slims. Thus, when he realized that
ah Muhammad did not live by his
n stringent teachings, Malcolm X
braced orthodox Islam with every-
ng he had and revealed the cor-
tion of Elijah Muhammad to the
rld. Malcolm told Alex Haley that
en he finally understood the true
ture of the corruption in the Na-
n, "I felt as though something in
e had failed, like the sun, or the
s." He paid for the purity of this
llusionment with his life, dying in
risly execution-style murder,
ch if Muhammad did not person-
approve he did nothing to stop.
vanzz's account, Elijah Muham-
mad is quoted as saying, "[Malcolm]
is the greatest hypocrite the NOI has
ever seen. He must be stopped at all
costs."

Just when Elijah Muhammad lost his truth, if that is indeed what happened, is difficult to pinpoint. What knowledge he had of, and what control he had over, the many internecine murders committed by his followers in his name will perhaps forever remain a mystery. What is known with certainty is that Elijah Muhammad himself grew rich off a religion that advocated asceticism (followers, most of them already dirt poor, were obligated to give at least 10 percent of their earnings to the Nation); that he fathered thirteen children by seven young women in his employ as church secretaries; and that he cannot have been wholly ignorant of his followers' crimes.

Violence was epidemic within the various factions of the Nation, particularly in the 1960's and early 1970's. Jealousy, coups d'etat, power struggles, and venality were just some of the motives behind all the fratricide. This period reached its nadir early in the afternoon of January 18, 1973, when gunmen entered the home of Hamaas Abdul Khaalis, a defector from the Nation. The house, located in the bucolic black upper-middle-class Washington neighborhood known as the Gold Coast, had been purchased for Khaalis by one of his followers, basketball star Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. When the killing that day was finished, five people lay dead, including four children, one of them a nine-day-old infant. Two women survived, left for dead, shot point blank in the head.

The authors of this carnage were quickly apprehended and found to be affiliated with the Nation of Islam's Philadelphia Mosque No. 12. They were convicted and sentenced to multiple consecutive life sentences, though one of the perpetrators, who had turned state's evidence, was found castrated, sodomized with a pipe, and murdered in his jail cell during the trial. Two other Black Muslims were later found guilty of that murder.

"Happiness is the best, the noblest and the pleasantest of things.' —Aristotle



"Happiness is for idiots." —Charles de Gaulle

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—Michael Ignatieff

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—*Time*

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BRAIN-CELL MEMORIES

Under the microscope, disease and life unfurl

By Spencer Nadler



The brain, unlike the rhythmically contracting heart, sits motionless in its cranium, no more animated than a liver or a spleen. Roughly the size and weight of a cantaloupe, it has the uniform consistency of cream cheese. The gray exterior undulates like Jupiter's moon Europa, and the homogeneous white interior conceals its daedal shape.

Under the microscope, however, the brain comes alive. Stained with a gold or silver impregnation, its quickened neurons dazzle with their inimitable forms. As a surgical pathologist, I've seen them sprout wispy tendrils so long as to seem boundless, coursing the brain like so many fault lines. Neurons can simulate cobs and spiders, branches, even ornate chandeliers. The smaller companion glial cells, though less conspicuous, are also branched,

these groundskeepers outnumber the neurons by ten to one and fill in the spaces between them. Envision your brain, its billions of impulsive neurons, tendrils entwined, connected up in electrical circuits, elaborate glial scaffolds shoring up these circuits like electrical tape. In the synapses, the fluid-filled clefts that separate neurons from one another, electrical impulses convert to chemical ones. Brain chemicals ooze through these clefts, bridging gaps with close-knit molecules. These chemicals are what make us weep, plumb the depths, or fiddle a tune.

I [illegible] by disease [illegible] responsibility [illegible] large tumor, born in the brain of M.K., [illegible] three years [illegible] Even [illegible] tumor-attached, not a frightened human [illegible]

Spencer Nadler's last article for Harper's Magazine, about a woman with Parkinson's disease, appeared in the June 1997 issue. A collection of his essays on medicine, Common Cures, will be published next year by Random House.

dimensions: the three spatial vectors
into the surrounding normal brain,
cells do, along neuron tracts, arbi-
trarily coursing through circuits until
the complexity of
the numbers and
functions of shorted
circuits, is
incalculable, the malignant glial pro-
gression all but unstoppable, the pa-
tient's behavior and loss of function
largely unpredictable. Think of a
shot put propelled through the con-
secutive strings of a million tennis
rackets; this conjures the enormity of
the glioblastoma's destructiveness.

In his essay "On Probability and
Possibility," Lewis Thomas con-
cludes that "we pass thoughts
around, from mind to mind, so com-
pulsively and with such speed that
the brains of mankind often appear,
functionally, to be undergoing fu-
sion." I am aware of this fusion when
captivated by meditations, poems, or
trenchant discourses. My microscop-
ic vision of a brain biopsy creates a
different fusion when I see the pre-
carious state of M.K.'s neurons in the
wake of his spreading tumor, they
seem to call out to my own, in urgent
message to the living from the
cellular dying and the dead.

In his eloquent memoir *Death Be*
Not Proud, John Gunther recounts
the life and death of his son Johnny
from glioblastoma multiforme. The
tumor hovered after each therapy
licking its wounds and, quickly re-
doubling its autonomous self, began
again to challenge the boy's brain for
space in his skull. Gunther
how Johnny maintained his
intellect, charm, ambi-
despite fifteen
The tumor's
glioblastoma's
thickening cells
spaces between
from
this is ineffective
cells
Nonetheless, and
He

tion of a brain tumor partly de-
mines a patient's clinical co
Johnny's tumor flourished in the
atively inactive occipital-parieta
cortex of his right brain. Apart fr
some loss of motor function on
left side and restrictions of his v
fields, he remained remarkably
tional to the end. The tumor
mately eroded a blood-vessel
and the resulting brain hemorrh
killed him.

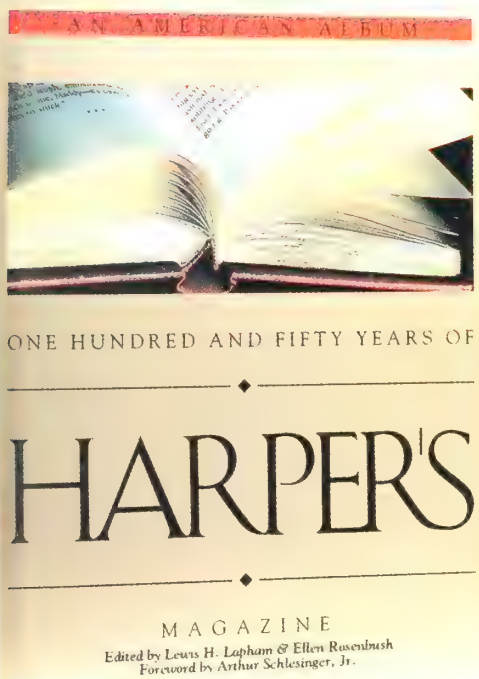
How very different was the
cal behavior of George Gersh
glioblastoma: In February 19
while playing his Concerto in
Philharmonic Auditorium in
Angeles, he suffered a momen
loss of consciousness. He miss
few bars, then continued as if
ing had happened. He later s
of smelling burnt rubber. W
physical examinations found n
ing wrong, the incident was a
uted to fatigue, the stress
enormous success. In April of
year, in a barbershop chair, the
mentary loss of consciousness
subsequent smelling of burnt r
recurred. By June, he was suff
agonizing headaches and ha
come periodically listless, irri
and confused; there were laps
coordination; the smell of b
rubber now haunted him. In
era that preceded neural ima
his neurologist found no evid
of an organic lesion, and his
and symptoms were attribute
hysteria. The glioblastoma
avoided clinical detection, l
symbiotically with its brain. It
probably been growing in
furtive way long before his firs
of consciousness.

On July 9, 1937, Gershwin
seizure and fell into a coma. S
quent surgery disclosed a large
mass in the right temporal lo
involved too many vital structu
be removed. A biopsy reve
glioblastoma. He died several
after surgery without ever rega
consciousness.

Despite the perilous ingress
tumor, Gershwin composed t
his most beautiful songs, "
Walked In" and "Love Is He
Story," in the last few months
The processing of music is not a

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—Newsday



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B

wn's right-sided tu-

scribed mass lying beneath the skull

ceived it in three gray-pink, rubbery frag-

ing from the fibrous vestments of the brain. The microscope reveals a whorled growth pattern of meningeal cells that are as furled as a spiral galaxy. The nuclei are agree-

crammed with their own cytoplasm

centrically laminated, known as a

are scattered about.

ding

Although I am not part of a patient's emotional experience, I am not completely extricated from it either. The sight of malignant cellular disarray burdens me with all that it foreboades, grows at my own mortality. The vision of a benign tumor's orderly cell growth absolves me, makes me feel as if I myself have been granted a reprieve.

The brain deceives itself and those who would know it. I remember a thirteen-year-old boy who presented with seizures. Scans revealed a space-occupying lesion in his brain that suggested a malignant neoplasm. A needle biopsy was done under radiological guidance. I distinctly remember the tissue I received, it was as white and friable as feta cheese. Under the microscope, a spread of tubercle bacilli, the causative organisms of tuberculosis, appeared as minikin, bloodred leeches. The cells in their wake, as it sucked dry of lifeblood, had disintegrated into amorphous fields of debris that stretched to the ends of the cellscape. Against a brilliant green background stain, these organisms resembled red tinsel heralding a high-colored microscopic Christmas. In reality, the causative bacilli of tuberculosis act more like passive bystanders than active bloodsuckers in the wasted tissue of disease. With infection, the body's complex defense mechanisms slowly kick in to destroy these bacilli and the human tissues harboring them. Often it is our powerful defensive arsenals—not the organisms themselves—that ravage infected body organs and create the disease. In an effort to kill off tuberculous organisms, the human body is perfectly capable of destroying itself, it has done so for centuries.

I saw very few tubercle bacilli in brain biopsies in the Sixties and Seventies. Despite its prevalence in Third World countries, tuberculosis was becoming an affliction of the past in the United States. It was alarming and disheartening, then, to witness a resurgence in the mid-

lugs have emerged that are

scathed by all known curative dr

inextricable as a spreading c

Tuberculosis that masses in

brain—a tuberculoma—remains

common in this country. This b

sy surprised me; I had expect

malignancy. It was one of t

humbling experiences that turn

well. The boy was started on an

berculous drug therapy, and wi

months the brain mass disappe

The biopsy *was* his microsc

Christmas.

Sometime later, I met the boy

ther at the local library. He expr

his thanks to me for having bee

bearer of such good news. He to

been expecting the worst and s

of a feeling that God had le

hand. He likened my

nosis to a benediction

Two years ago I read a tro

brain in a whole new way. Alth

Parkinson's disease is not diagn

by brain biopsy—the affected

rons are too deep, the structures

vital to warrant entry with a kni

needle—it hovers around me. I

at the sepia photograph of my p

nal grandfather, his facial expre

enigmatic, his fingers pressed to

er in rigid extension like a clue

and his daughter, Aunt Bess,

died of Parkinson's in their eig

After her death, I went hom

Montreal for my father's eight

birthday. It was an exuberant

bration for an amiable man w

only concession to age was a ri

his golf handicap from single to

ble digits. A month later, an o

pedist examining my father's

back thought he detected the st

visage of Parkinson's. His suspi

was soon confirmed.

The diagnosis of Parkinson's

be made clinically and suppo

with a PET brain scan. It re

from a mysterious degeneratio

specific neurons whose pigme

bodies lie in the substantia n

which, no bigger than a thumb

is the repository for these mel

laden neurons. The neurotrans

ter dopamine, a product of thes

ing nigral neurons, is also lac

In this way, the computatio

body movements are gradually j

ized until the body is no more
n a casement for the mind and
l. And no two parkinsonians suf
their motor losses in the same
or at the same rate. Initially
y quirks can be subtle. Eventual-
one or more cardinal signs ap-
r to give away the body's morbid
et.

Rigidity is one cardinal sign of
kinson's; it involves all voluntary
scles. And the poverty of my fa-
r's facial movements was an ex-
ssion of that rigidity. The easy grin
d so often looked to for approval
childhood had permanently van-
d as his stare hardened to a mask.
as as though a part of his person-
had been stolen from him.

He was treated with Sinemet,
ch is converted in the brain to
amine. Stemming his dopamine
in this way seemed to halt the
gression of his stiffness for a few
's. At eighty-three, he stopped
ing golf with his cronies and ex-
sed a desire to play golf with my
her instead. "I'm making too
ny bad shots," he told her. "I tell
body to do something and it just
't do it." His hands now seemed
stiff to grip his golf clubs proper-
nd his postural reflexes were un-
al to his task. Over time the
emet lost its effectiveness, so his
tor added Deprenyl to inhibit
her dopamine breakdown. But
gs could no longer halt my fa-
's increasing stiffness or the
kening of spontaneous move-
ts. He was having trouble walk-
even with a cane, and his
lling gestures lacked dexterity.
onger able to hold cards proper-
shuffle a deck, he declined
e games with his friends.

wo years later, he needed a walk-
visit his doctors. Otherwise, he
confined to home. He moved
with slow deliberateness, nev-
ziness, and his daily routine—
ing, eating, using the bathroom,
ing about the house, undress-
—consumed the greater part of
stay. His simplest rituals had be-
his life. A year later, his debili-
n was such that my mother had
it up his food and turn him in
Did he feel dehumanized by his
's dissolution, hopelessly beret
of his dignity? As a former athlete,
did he view his rigidity as a bitter
paradox? Did his burden dampen his
sensuous pleasures, pepper him with
despair? He never confided his feel-
ings to me, and, regretfully, I never
pursued them. Through it all, he re-
mained mentally acute and uncom-
plaining. This stoicism seemed to at-
test to his courage and embody all
that he endured.

In his eighty-seventh year, my fa-
ther was hospitalized for a bladder in-
fection; a Parkinson's sluggishness of
his bladder muscles was no doubt to
blame. He was joking with the nurses
the evening before his discharge,
making sure that levity prevailed over
illness. Later that night, while sleep-
ing, a massive heart at-
tack killed him.

When I look back, my memo-
ries of my father are filtered through
my understanding of the changes in
his brain. I clearly recall the sum-
mer afternoons at his swim club. I
was nine or ten years old. His sub-
stantia nigra teemed with healthy
neurons then; their tapered bodies
were so full of gold-brown melanin
pigment that they resembled
schools of trout. We'd buck the St.
Lawrence River currents together,
stroke for stroke. I can still feel that
cold, choppy water numbing me,
smell the scent of riparian elms and
maples and oaks, taste the sweet
machismo of it.

I remember a day. I couldn't
have been more than twelve
when I caddied for my father. The
way he drove the golf ball off the
tee is what stays with me: There
was a confidence in his compact
frame, in his bearing, in the way he
addressed the ball. His strapping ni-
gral neurons were perfectly attuned,
flawlessly promoting his athleti-
cism. His backswing was shortened
somewhat, and his stroke seemed
easy. It was the hand speed he
could muster that was extraordi-
nary. The ball would explode off
the tee, splitting the fairway, carry-
ing below the height of the trees.
Rising slowly, steadily, borne in its
orbit like a distant comet, it
seemed to hang endlessly in the
clear and piercing sky. And when it

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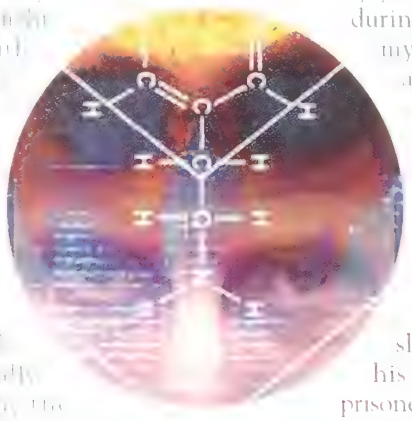
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I ENVISION MY FATHER'S DYING NEURONS—TOXIC, FADING, GRANULES CLUSTERING AT TH DEATH SITES, ALONE AS GRAVESTONES

slow freeze. Although his body ultimately imprisoned him, it highlighted the quickness of his mind. Often he seemed to use his rigid contines as a springboard, trying to reinvent and reclaim himself. It was this palpable spirit that made his helplessness so heroic to me. I envisioned his nigral neurons, now strangely toxic and fading, pocked with round, pink bodies that looked like dabs of cirrus cloud at sunrise. As these neurons slowly died, incontinent of their melanin, I could see cold brown granules clustering at neuron death sites, naked and alone as gravestones. And glial cells, ever at hand,

Thinking the spaces left

The

I think about my own

Susceptibility genes for Parkinsonism have been documented in large families, though

Since

in my family

with Parkinson's who could

sample of my blood. As new Parkinsusceptibility genes are discovered, my sample will be checked

each newfound mutation. Do I w

to know if Parkinson's lies ahead

me? Do I want to involve other f

ly members, asking them to

samples of their own blood? I see

harm in facing the threat of this

poverishing illness, and I hope to

the family discourse about it

means to clarify what binds us to

another.

My family, moreover, tells

how I remind them of my fat

Not only the physical similar

they say, but the voice, the mann

isms. They smile when they tell

these things, and I wonder w

memories of my father I trigge

each of them. Is this likeness int

ned by my father's absence? Is it

own aging that reminds them

and more of how my father appe

in his healthy old age before Par

son's became a part of him?

I superimpose my father's deci

ed substantia nigra on my own

wonder about the similarities. I

no pride, only dread, in any like

here. In reverie, my face beco

thickset with age, and the griz

hairs that sprout from my scalp

brows and mustache make me

faded, exposed to time. Then my

tures freeze, a fixed stare that h

ens against emotion. Behind

stony visage perks my lucid brain

pulsing circuits orchestrating

angst and abject loneliness,

degradation.

If my nigral neurons do falter

Parkinson's entombs me, will o

neurons, other circuits, brace

against my own looming rigid

Will my father's courage and c

munity enable me to move bey

my adversity? For now, my ni

neurons remain loaded w

dopamine. Ticking with cautio

ted the silken surge of my b

movements, sleek and nimble, f

ing free. And my smile affirms

that moves me.

IT COUNTS AS SEEING

By David Means



went right up to
n and took his elbow,
even asking him if I
ould, because he was
ading hellfire for the
st step, not seeing—
cause how could
?—that step, flashing
s red-tipped cane
und in the air (*in the*
, I stress). What else
ld I do except grab
n? Others might have
ne for his hand or
oulder, but having
en trained in the pro-
eties of guiding the
nd, I took the back of
elbow, which he
ked quickly away be-
stating, flatly, in a
n, resolute manner,
h a slight accent
ish or mock British,
east Harvard—Back
Back off, he says,
I let go, and then he
bles all the way down to the bot-
of the stairs, doing this cart-
el motion, head over heels. He
a firm grasp on the acrobatics of
tumble, I think, and when it
ed down in my mind it was very
h like those folks up in space
fing off, showing the schmucks
down on earth, poor souls, the de-
lights of zero-G. This blind guy took
a plum and proper control of his body
in relation to gravity and went down
those stairs with wild agility, not a
bone broken or a ligament torn in
this version of events. Across the
street people looked wild-eyed at the
scene. One gentleman—in an ele-
gant suit coat and tie—I noticed
specifically, a witness, who would
back up my claim (or so I thought at
the time) that I was only trying to as-
sist this blind guy in
getting down the stairs.
This man made a bee-
line across the street
and stepped over the
moaning blind man and
came right up and be-
gan to shout. He had a
ruddy face, up close,
with pockmarks, a
drinker's face, my father
would say, and this face
ruined the suit coat. Up
close it was stained with
glossy streaks of what
looked like melted but-
ter. This quick assess-
ment made me realize
that he was a derelict,
who, along with one
other guy in town, slept
in doorways, copped a
buck here and there,
and so on and so on.
I realized not only that
he didn't witness the
fall but that he was
yelling at me about something else,
had me pegged for a wise-ass, ap-
parently, and was yelling

Marvin [illegible] seeing to have to
spare me this [illegible] aggravation
you [illegible], because for God's sake,
Marv is [illegible] to leave you [illegible]
[illegible] me for you, or any
of that . . .

I didn't see the blind guy at all:
where he hit that first step and fell
was already [illegible]. I was [illegible]

Means is the author of Assorted Fire-
arts, a collection of stories. His last story
Harper's Magazine, "The Grasses
ater," appeared in the May 1998 issue.

I

with an almost imperative desire to

help him through the d

erly guiding him down the stairs. Counting my bills, fanning

sip—the owner of that boat with the

ent's

river. Almost ready to burst with the desire not only to take his elbow but

there a sharper, more protruding

in my hands, and to help him

n the matter, I'm bound to

per internal duty to help

will be pointed out to me later

is head, to help myself out

as well by satisfying my

help.

M

help guide the

luring

all and th

pushed him. I was angry and i

that I help him. I didn't help

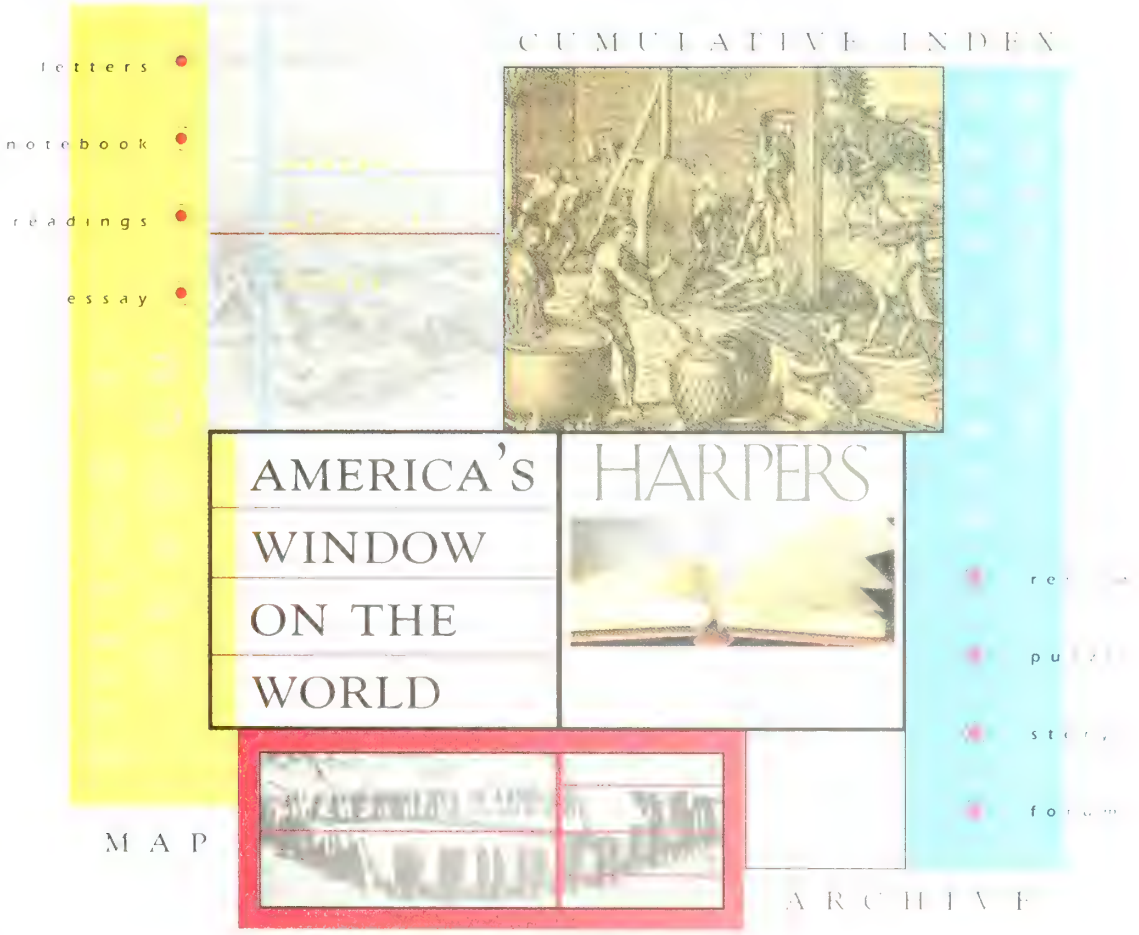
didn't come near him. I was

the bank counting my money

he fell. I gave him a good har

e me. He w

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W

man being

blind man is

traps. The

I was clearly evident, and I

seen him before, I don't think,

ory because in this town you mostly

closer, shoving through the crowd,

and get up near him and see that he

sweat over his whole face, from top

to bottom. He rests in a knowing

ance, too, and is going through his

own mental records to try to make

the connection. But before he can

because his mouth is open

hooks whisked away, held on both

sides by the cops who have to get

him through the crowd, which is

closing in, a few people shouting and

calling him an asshole and saying he

should be shot, pushing a blind man

down stairs like that, until out of im-

pulse I am shouting at him, too,

yelling, You're the most vile bastard

on the face of the earth, you mother-

fucker, how dare you, how dare you,

how dare you push a poor soul down

the stairs—blind man no less! Blind

as bats! Blind as bats! How can such

evil be allowed to coexist with all

things in this world. And so

and so forth as I work my way

to proclaim as I can so that I'm

hanging over him, right behind the

resisting at all.

A

this touch-and-feel stuff is second na-

in turn into my brain, where the sen-

know the bank steps well from years

marble, maybe sandstone, and ju

I'm at the first step, reaching for

dup, this hand takes me elbow

voice says behind me. Let me

back slightly, saying, Back off, bec

I hate help most of the time, and

cially when I know the place and

layout and have the whole thing

mapped in my head, ever even

so when it's a dummy hand

sopping wet palm. Then next ti

I'm going through the air, and th

an explosive flowering of spar

my eyelids (a classic flowerin

sparks, probably from the pressu

the brain striking so violently

the cerebral sac), or not so muc

eyelids but back near the cent

my brain. Then I'm being trans

ed to the hospital, waking to th

ters of bad truck shocks over the

holed main streets (another

one learns with sight loss is nat

streets based on pothole thud

thumps and various bands of

ment and blacktop—there

shocking inconsistency in the

grades of paving materials, a cor

acy of gradients), feeling on m

to the hospital partly used and

ed because there is still a cold s

faint impression on my elbow

point where I think the man

me—and his voice is hovering

ear, that Let me. And then I'm

tended to in critical care, h

hanging on, with severe hemor

ing (I'm told later) and a ver

contusion along my temple.

Near-death experiences ab

I'm angelic. I'm lifted throug

joists and beams of the hospit

am flying out over the town. I'

ly vested with sight. The Hud

fantastically blue. It hooks t

west near Indian Point, the do

the power plant spewing stea

the south, through the milky

a summer day, is the thin gra

joined monolith of the World

Center on the horizon; and

left of it, the needle point of th

pire State Building injecting t

Holy. Holy. Holy. I see it all.

It is this vision alone that h

tained me through it all, ke

dive. It is this vision—because

so good and pure—that I count

tually seeing. It makes me w

thank the man who helped me

steps, to offer him my hand, to
check for at least a thousand
in his hands. It is true that be-
the fire rose up to take my eyes I
so used to seeing the open vistas
he Hudson that I hardly knew I
seeing them and took for granted
simple sight of the Westchester
e. Sailing a boat itself is an ex-
nely visual experience, much
e than people would ever ever
gine: the luffing sails always in
l of trimming, those small little
elet ripples along the taut cloth
the top of the mast, the heeling
of the boat against the
horizon.

his blind guy was just about to
a tumble—I mean quivering
over the edge of the steps, not
bothering with his cane, tucking
ur der his armpit, because he was
both hands to stuff some bills
into the narrow bank envelope
was having a hard time because
bills were soft and finger-worn,
a sow's ear (or as soft as
nois). He was approaching the
a bit sidelong, just about to the
and narrow nature of the plat-
s—built to look grand and stately
n seen from the street. Being
d in architectonics, an engineer
rt in spotting structural deficien-
I noticed the disharmony in the
e setup, including this man who
oing toward the steps as I moved
two yards behind him when he
frozen midair pose, a stasis
ng there. His seersucker suit
led around his hips, a big stain
low across the back of the coat
of those stains that appear when
pull the coat, reeking of moth
, out of winter storage). I knew
an not by name but by his repu-
as the owner of the old boat-
who had suffered from a freak
ent (according to some) or by
hness (according to others),
ling down a gluing compound
igniting a Camel Light and
y creating a massive cloud of
ne flame that devoured his boat
s eyesight. As a divorcee (every-
new), he carried a lonely de-
r along with his blindness, by
mean beside his blindness or
ounded with it. You could
tweeze this aspect out of him if you tried hard, separate it the way a prism might separate light, so that you knew his wife, Janice, who had remarried and might be seen picking her kid up from the front of the school at times, hadn't just left him because of the blindness (you gave her the grace of that doubt) and probably had left him for much better and clear-cut reasons, one of which was his nasty temper. He was seen taking a hammer to the last of his boats, a blue-trimmed day cruiser—blindly groping his way over the hull and smashing the bulkhead before one of his yard hands grabbed him from behind and subdued him. Rumor has it that it took at least five men to get him calmed down. He fought like a man who couldn't see, clawing the air with his fists, kicking whatever he could, clutching whatever was there to grab. Perhaps this gave me pause, this violent tendency—or the hearsay of it, the rumor itself solidifying into something larger than this man. Rumor also had it that he hated like hell to be helped in any manner and was prone to taking his cane to the side of your head if you did so much as offer up a careful hand on the elbow, and had even fought valiantly against a warning device to help guide the sight-impaired across the streets of our fair town. The fear that he might slam his cane into my brow restrained me. I did nothing. I waited half a second and let him take that step. I did give a bit of a warning shout, just before he went down. It was a squeak, my wife said, like air being released through the taut neck of a balloon. Off he went into the air, head over heels. My shoes felt heavy on the steps. I went down and cradled his heavy head and stated firmly that someone should call 911. You're not going to hit me with your cane, I was thinking. You're not going to hurt anyone. But I was saying, You're gonna be all right, pal. It's going to be all right, buddy. You ain't slipping away from us yet. Hang in there. Hang on. Help is on the way. It'll be here soon. Don't move. Don't move at all. Just stay right there and breathe easy. Take nice easy breaths. Don't go. Don't go at all. Just a few minutes and you'll be on your way. ■

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voice triumphs over reflective ag
ment. The author's idea—that
fleeting, theme-park version of re
is supplanting direct evaluation of
crete experience—is painfully co
It deserves, however, more ca
study than his prose provides. Ar
is wrong on three counts.

First, "World World" is not
It's been with us at least since Ar
tle told his leaders how best to s
the cooperation of their subjects
ond, Clinton's post-impeachm
State of the Union address was,
arguably, a heroic act of resistan
World World. In it, he attempt
reinforce the line between the pu
and the public, a line besieged b
Republicans in their efforts to inte
a private sin as a political crime.
ton's speech made me proud to
American, and I'm being only s
ly "ironic" as I write this. Third,
gotita indicts the wrong Bill, fo
Gates rather than Clinton w
guiltiest of crafting a cheerful subs
for reality. It is Gates who has c
World World in which "com
tion" means bullying and "lear
in public schools means knowing
to use his software.

Anthony Flinn
Cheney, Wash.

Art for Blame's Sake

Could it be that the progra
which Raoul Middleman was a vi
critic ["An American Sensibi
Readings, July] was to blame t
art students' ignorance of art his
Middleman seems to assume that
present generation" is concerne
ly with "making it," like a bun
fame-addicted junkies. Yet his su
ority complex is even more offe
than the students' alleged superf
its. Instead of being so haughty
aloof, perhaps the critic could
suggested a change to the school'
riculum? Did he attempt to conve
importance of an art-historical
ground to these students? Eve
conclusion, that the American a
sensibility "inclines more to an
neering intelligence" is absurdly
plistic. You'd think a smart guy
Middleman would know better.

Jeri Kibler
Ashland, Ohio

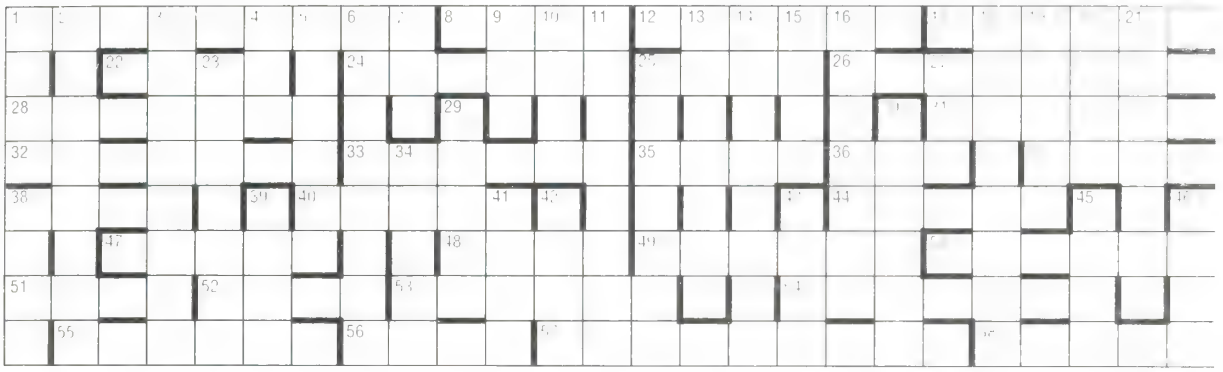
War of the World Worlds

I have fewer and fewer hours for
reading in my day, and I sometimes
wonder whether all the ones I devote
to Harper's Magazine are well spent or
merely guilty pleasures. Then, after
making my way through Jacques
Barzun's meanderings in the world's
many cultures, I come [upon] the mis-
/ [apprehension] "World World," [July]
and realized that at least one Amer-
ican's dangerous image-mindedness
overwhelms all. I had to take a
moment to recover myself before I
could work
Wilmington, N.C.

PUZZLE

"__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __"

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.



A popular message is hidden in the completed diagram. The message is in two common code, and the placement of the letters, one in each column, is part of the code. *Note: Ha, Letters, Code, Placement, Message.* Note: The code letters in columns beside Ha, 17, and Ds are not natural. Note: Clues and answers are listed to complete the puzzle, write the title of the message in the blanks above. Clue answers include proper names, foreign words, and uncommon words at 51A, 52A, 19D, 21D, and 43D. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 50.

Across

1 Absorb the man's essay, finding false logic (9)
8 Ring back teddy bear (4)
12 Love-bird topic for swimmers who are armed (6)
17 Stiffening with rigor, part of a joint is audible (6)
22 We primates laugh about what medicine does (4)
24 I'm getting back into sacramental proclaiming (6)
25 Whispering Pine, before noon (4)
26 Politico hugging infant is missing a lot (8)
28 Practicality, after false start, leads to hopelessness (7)
31 Kid everything, reacting from Mexican glass (6)
32 Charges farms, going over her limits (7)
33 Vogue clothing outfit, in perfect shape (6)
35 Sound course for cat (4)
36 What is the reason this is heard in a gym (3)
37 Registers sections of ashes, perhaps? (4)
38 Animal cages about a thousand, takes off (4)
40 North winds rose, in part (5)
44 Griffin and others heard these missiles (5)
47 Early Oklahomans add zero to ten digits (5)
48 Excessively, at shedding a tear (4)
49 He takes undue interest in making unseen secret (6)
50 Border inside one town in Italy (6)
51 Putting back papers in nests (4)
52 One military policeman, one African regiment ... (4)
53 ___ in Dept. of the Interior's sexy Indian clothing (6)
54 Rodino's reappointed to the Interior (7)
55 Pronounced sick, lick periodical (6)
56 Prime chicken (4)
57 Medium in which L.L. cut cost severely (9)
58 Small lousy thing, or, conversely, big boomer (5)

Down

1 Slammed on Ethan's hunt (4)
2 Doctor, get [illegible] over the [illegible] (5)
3 Some who bet won't stand in [illegible] (8)
4 Very mild [illegible] (4)
5 Dan saw which [illegible] (6)
6 Receive river with [illegible] (5)
7 Secret [illegible] (3)
9 Work head off, being slick (3)
10 Nothing at other end of long [illegible] (4)
11 Parlor [illegible] (8)
13 Money [illegible] (7)
14 [illegible] (4)
15 Bull about the Big Apple [illegible] (4)
16 Farmers write about [illegible] (5)
18 Forgetting ticket sales [illegible] (8)
19 Editor runs up missing [illegible] (5)
20 Italian man can, joining circus (4)
21 [illegible] (6)
23 [illegible] (7)
27 [illegible] (5)
29 Newswoman has by-line inside (3)
30 [illegible] (7)
34 [illegible] (6)
35 [illegible] (6)
39 [illegible] (4)
41 [illegible] (5)
42 [illegible] (4)
43 [illegible] (4)
45 [illegible] (4)
46 [illegible] (4)

Contest Rules: [illegible] 1992. It's [illegible]. [illegible] of the first three correct solutions opened [illegible] in the November issue. Winners of the [illegible] Merriman Hopper, [illegible] Merrill, Nevada, and E.M.A. McKay, Orrville, Ohio, Canada.

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Zebra Mussel	1988	Europe	Mollusks	$5 billion

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LEE KRASNER

With fierce determination and an ever-questioning eye, Lee Krasner helped define — and redefine — the art of this century. Her work was a journey of constant reinvention. Over the course of five decades, Krasner defied convention and created an identity distinct from her role as Jackson Pollock's wife. From figurative painting to Abstract Expressionism and beyond, that journey is now captured in *Lee Krasner*, a full-scale retrospective of the artist's work.

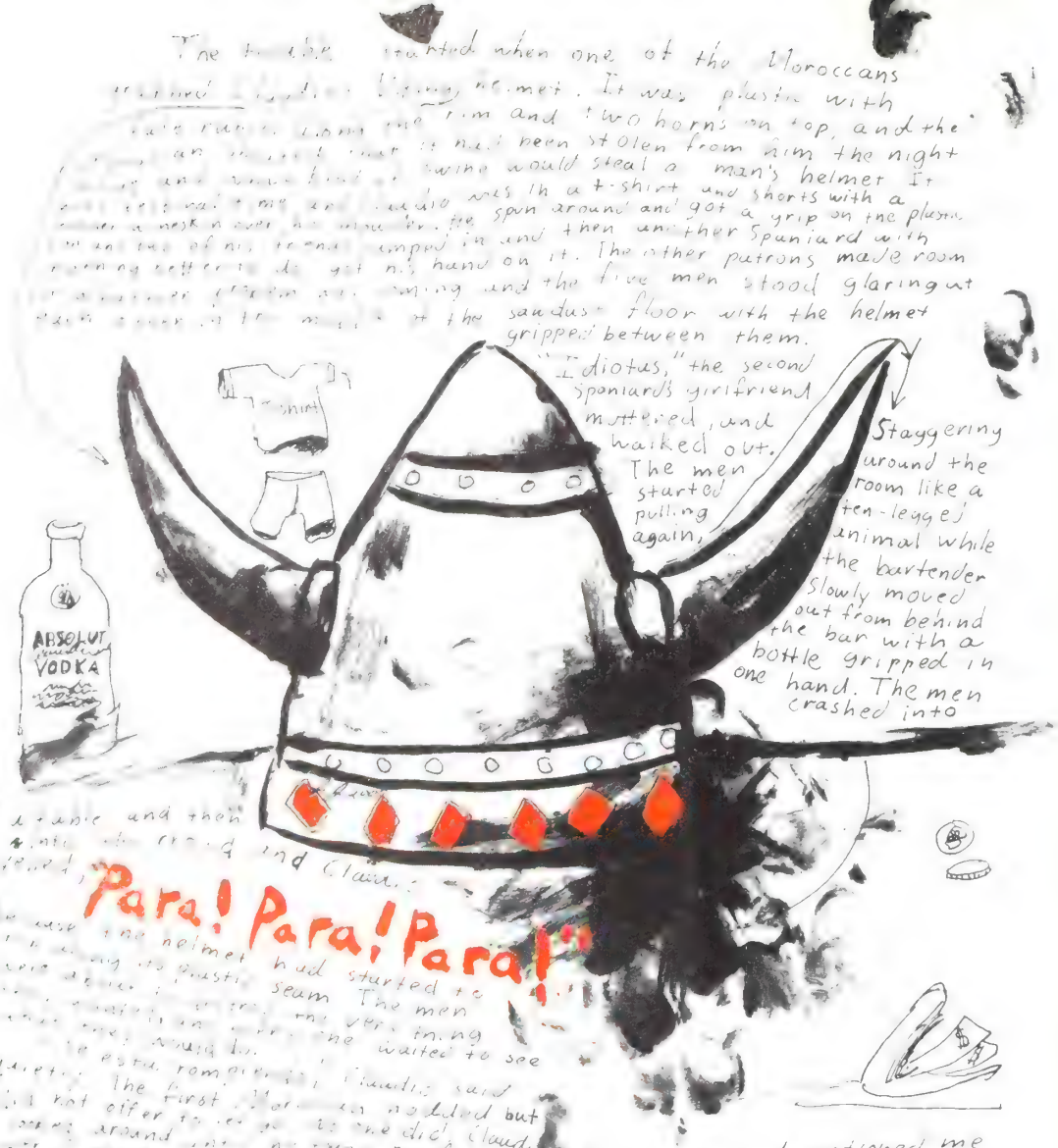
For more than forty years, the Philip Morris family of companies has been committed to supporting visionary individuals and pioneering organizations that enhance the quality of our world. We're proud to continue this tradition with sponsorship of the national tour of *Lee Krasner*.

Lee Krasner was organized by **Independent Curators International,** New York. Its national tour, which has included the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Des Moines Art Center and the Akron Art Museum, culminates at the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

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ABSOLUT JUNGER

HARPER'S
M A G A Z I N E
FOUNDED IN [illegible]
OCTOBER [illegible]

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A SEA CHANGE

[illegible]

HARPER'S

LETTERS

Where the West Begins

Skip Herrmann's indignant letter in the August issue, stating that "nothing could be further from the truth" than my observation ["An Expedition Map," June] that in the mid-nineteenth century the U.S. government aided settlers, homesteaders, emigrants, overlanders, miners, and other pioneers moving through the trans-Mississippi region with aids, supply posts, troops, and forts, and his remark (based on what sources?) that the pioneer "did come first" (conveniently ignoring the earlier Quebec trappers and traders, and the large indigenous population of Indian tribes, estimated in the millions in the pre-contact West, whose descendants may bristle at his use of the word "first"), were a reminder to me that at the table of the history of the West, a napkin is still laid for the ghost of Frederick Jackson Turner.

Those pioneers did not walk wide-eyed and wondering across a pure and empty continent. Quite right, someone had gone up the Platte River [illegible] before Stansbury's exploration [illegible] and someone had gone before the so-called pioneers. John D. Unruh, in his 1979 *The Plains Across*, outlines specific examples of routes the "pioneers" learned from Indian tribes and Indian guides (sometimes hired, sometimes kidnapped) to show [illegible]

[illegible]
New York, NY.

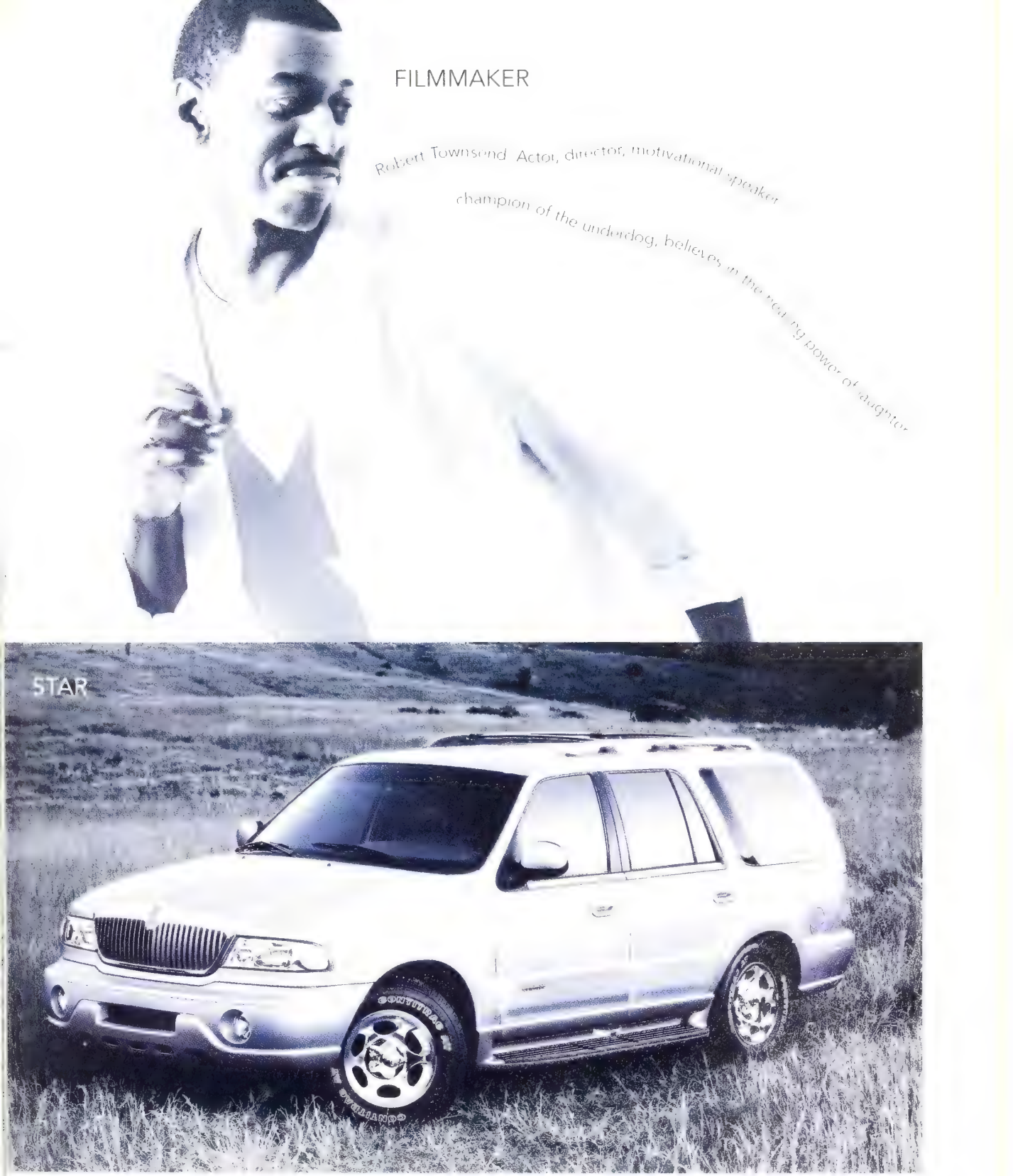
In reference to the aid given emigrant travelers by the U.S. government, Herrmann might look at Unruh's chapter on the dependence of pioneers on Washington. "Most pre–Civil War overlanders found the U.S. government, through its armed forces, military installations, Indian agents, explorers, surveyors, road builders, physicians, and mail carriers to be an impressively potent and helpful source." I do wonder how Herrmann explains to himself the Grattan affair, the existence of the Bozeman trail, the establishment of many small but strategically placed forts. That he has strong feelings about "pioneers" is clear. It is also clear that those feelings are romantic and uninformed.

Annie Proulx
Centennial, Wyo.

Vanishing Tongues

The death of over half the world's languages clearly represents a terrible loss for humankind. With every tongue that disappears, a window onto the diversity of human thought is closed. For obvious reasons, the issue of language endangerment is one that lies close to the hearts of linguists, so I was excited to see Earl Shorris's article on the subject ["The Last Word," August].

Shorris provides a human perspective on an important political issue, but part of his article disturbed me greatly. He twice implies that Chomskyan linguists are in some way either delinquent in responding to the tragedy of language loss or perhaps even indirectly responsible for it. Shorris claims that Chomskyan linguists are look



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Atlantic Monthly

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2000

THE 80TH
ANNIVERSARY EDITION

JOHN EDGAR WIDEMAN
BETH ORDAN
MARY GORDON
[illegible]

AN ANCHOR
PAPERBACK ORIGINAL

[illegible] deep psychological patterns underlying language, so to them [illegible]

[illegible] latter part of this statement [illegible] Chomskyan linguistics is directed toward examining the ways in which an innate mental language organ can produce the diversity of human languages. An important component of this study is the investigation of a wide variety of languages. While it is true that in the 1960's and early 1970's, Chomskyan linguistics focused primarily on English and other firmly established European languages, that simply isn't the case anymore. Shorris's claim is an insult to the vast majority of Chomskyan linguists who are working hard both at their theoretical studies and at developing language-maintenance strategies for indigenous communities, efforts that include producing pedagogical tools for endangered-language instruction.

One could also point out that the study of endangered languages is a natural outgrowth of Noam Chomsky's political philosophy. He has long been an advocate of the human rights of indigenous people around the world. This includes opposition to governmental policies of suppression of linguistic rights, which have led to the demise, or near demise, of many of the languages Shorris discusses.

[illegible]
Department of Linguistics
[illegible]

Earl Shorris's article on the plight of [illegible] small languages raises issues that should be important to everyone. [illegible] North America's indigenous languages [illegible] particularly [illegible] publishing [illegible] of the [illegible] Native Americans to their [illegible] is often lost in the hustle of [illegible]

One would probably not be exaggerating [illegible] every Native [illegible] to this country loses [illegible] project. Some are elaborate, well funded programs, [illegible] ancestral [illegible]

prove effective only time can tell. [illegible] to maintain [illegible] identity, languages must survive.

In 1992 the Native American [illegible] Act was passed by Congress to assist tribes in developing projects to revitalize their languages. Unfortunately, the funds approved were [illegible] appropriated. The result was [illegible] the Administration for Native Americans, a subagency of the Department of Health and Human Services, [illegible] given the responsibility of implementing this act and to need to [illegible] stretch its budget for social and economic-development projects, [illegible] a woefully inadequate $2 million annually for the task of assisting tribes in retaining their languages.

The fact that the United States [illegible] complicit in the loss of Native languages is obvious, but blame only [illegible] frustration. Let us hope Shorris's article will build a fire under those who need to understand that these endangered languages are the canaries in humanity's coal mine.

Gerald L. Hill, Oneida
Indigenous Language Institute
Santa Fe, N.Mex.

In some far future, we may all be monolingual and unicultural (and Coca-Cola-drinking, café-au-lait-colored atheists as well), and Earl Shorris correctly suggests that, if so, we may be poorer without the Mayan words for "blue." But we may also have forgotten who is Irish and who is Tutsi; no more Serbs and Croats; no more Muslims and Hindus.

Does globalization bring cultural amnesia? Maybe. But a loss of cultural diversity is a small price to pay for an end to communal slaughter.

David Allen
Fairbanks, Alaska

Recently I was in Malaysia, after a twenty-five-year absence. The country is multiethnic and multilingual, but English has long been the lingua franca there. A number of years ago, however, the mildly xenophobic government instituted a Malay-only diet for the educational system, and younger citizens, especially in more rural areas, are now finding it harder to communicate with speakers of [illegible]

eam languages. The image of young
ays chatting in their native tongue
ile enjoying a Coke or driving a
ssan is nice, of course, but these
ople badly need to maintain their
ingual status if they are to partake of
e twenty-first-century economy.

ement Salvadori
ascadero, Calif.

ren't You Experienced?

John Jeremiah Sullivan ["The Death
the Hired Poem," August], in his
notation of Monster.com's "Road
ot Taken" ad, seems not to realize
at nothing much has changed in
nerica: ads still deceive and corpo-
ions still exploit whatever they can
their hands on to form a favorable
fallacious image of themselves. Our
orite songs (in my case, Jimi Hen-
x's "Freedom") will eventually ac-
mpany scenes of Chevys or Mazdas
Jaguars piloted by professional drivers
closed courses toward popsicle-or-
ge sunsets. Like Robert Frost's po-
, the lyrics of these songs will be
pped, the riffs clunkily reduced, and
memory they might once have
cited will be supplanted by automo-
e-lease terms. This is heartbreaking
ff, but it certainly isn't new. To de-
e a two-page spread to another such
version—this one happens to be on
Web in addition to being on TV—
ms a waste. And Sullivan seems to
k a sense of humor about the whole
ng. We live in ludicrous times, for
ich the best defense is a refusal to
e the marketing folks seriously.

g Sanders
w York City

nspiracy of Dunces

Of all the conspiracy theories I've
rd, Lewis Lapham's ["School Bells,"
gust] is the goofiest. Economic in-
sts conspire to keep kids ignorant
rder to sell products? Please.
es, our society has a strong bias to-
d consumerism. (One can trace its
s back at least as far as the 1920s,
en the twin engines of mass pro-
tion and mass media were invent-
) But that bias is the residue of mil-
ns of individuals striving to create
sell products to feed their fami-
, not a conspiracy. Most salesmen
have kids in school—do they want them kept dumb in order to help meet their sales quotas? Indeed, corporations need employees who can read, write, and, yes, think. And the economy needs more people with the skills to create wealth, because that creates more consumer spending.

As for pornography, booze, and gambling—does Lapham really think that education mitigates any of those? On which planet?

Our education crisis stems from neglect. We have delegated public education to a confederacy of dunces that squanders millions, then claims the problem is lack of funding. In Los Angeles many schools lack enough textbooks to go around. And they spend nearly $8,000 per student annually. Meanwhile, L.A. graduates students who haven't learned the basic skills that were taught effectively 100 years ago in one-room schoolhouses.

Forget the corporations. Until we can radically reform the present educational bureaucracy, nothing will change.

Jim Bass
Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Lewis Lapham's "School Bells" is nothing short of brilliant. Having taught in a public school for the past twenty-eight years, I can attest to the fact that education is moving in a negative direction. Classrooms, especially in New York—as a result of initiatives by the state Board of Regents—are becoming increasingly test-driven. Little emphasis is placed on real thinking and even less on creativity.

While state leaders tout the raising of standards, I am reminded of the "increasing" of chocolate rations in Orwell's *1984* from 30 grams to 20. In an effort to appear proactive, districts are jumping on every bandwagon, from "looping" to "block scheduling" to "semestering." By demonstrating to the general population that more students are reaching higher standards, as evidenced by increased scores on what are really bogus tests, people's fears at the decline in education can be quelled.

Lapham is correct that the powers that be are not looking for real solu-

Continued on page 95



NOTEBOOK

Caesar's wives

By Lewis H. Lapham

—Thomas Beer

B

disinfect the Oval Office and scrub [illegible] the marble halls of Congress. Having completed their message and the spring primary campaigns, and as recently as last February, in Michigan and New Hampshire, McCain was still astonishing rural crowds with his travelling demonstrations of dust mops, air fresheners, and rubber gloves.

[illegible] was the summer of prosperity in Philadelphia and Los Angeles, and the special interests weren't making things easy for the laundry services entering the money was everywhere in glaring sight—flowing over the hotel bars, dressed prettily in silk on the sofas in executive suite, handed around [illegible] in the hospitality tents—and the commercial sponsors didn't bother to conceal its origin or intent. In Philadelphia and again in Los Angeles the same caucus of prominent corporations (General Motors, AT&T, Motorola, Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft, etc., etc.) arranged golf outings, paid for the music and the balloons. The event [illegible] were somewhat different—the Republicans comforted with Tiffany crystal and Mozart [illegible] the Democrats with the singing of Barbra Streisand or the [illegible] Travolta. Both parties made similarly fine distinctions between donors of large and small denominations [illegible] "Chairman's Circle," patrons who had furnished at least $500,000 since January 1999; the Republicans awarded [illegible] [illegible] prompted a murmur of distress from [illegible] noticed that at the cocktail parties in the Four Seasons Hotel the Regents weren't herded into corners and that in the courtesy vans en route to White Marsh Valley Country Club they had more room to stretch their legs. When the victims of discrimination brought their sorrows to Mel Sembler, Florida shopping center magnate and finance chairman of the Republican National Committee, he answered with a clarity of phrase that was missing from the speaker's podium in both convention halls.

"You pay a little more," Mr. Sembler said, "you get a lot more."

Although admirable both for its brevity and its axiomatic truth, Mr. Sembler's blunt a definition of American politics is not one that flatters the country's preferred image of itself. As descendants of the seventeenth-century Puritans who landed in Massachusetts Bay with the idea that they had been granted the states of grace lost to Sodom by corrupt and inattentive Europeans, we choose to believe that America is as innocent as Eden. Foreigners commit crimes against humanity; Americans make well-intentioned mistakes. Foreigners incite wars, encourage terrorists, manufacture cocaine; Americans cleanse the world of its spiritual impurities. True, our corporations occasionally permit themselves the luxuries of thievery and fraud, but such crimes, being American and therefore subject to our special arrangement with Providence, can be understood as temporary breakdowns in the otherwise flawless machinery of the American soul. The fault is never one of motive, and our hearts are always pure.

The doctrines of American exc[illegible]

education. The nation spends as

f-respecting banks in every Amer-
n city send millions of dollars each

e drugstore stocks hundreds of lo-
ns, perfumes, and spray colognes

euphemisms of political correct-
s, so that it becomes wrapped in plas-

ansed of strong expression, the short

guise its association with animals.
Transferred into the political arena,

ows who know little or nothing of

s of the troupe might go so far as to

ents in question invariably have to

ce, starch the shirt fronts of the

ns from capitalism's bloody sheets.

cks in Brentwood and Rittenhouse

portion, but fortunately for the

h the resolve of patriots, and by the

of the first night of the Republican

going to have any trouble dispos-

nd Estée Lauder. The cleansing

ke sanctimony the detergent and

Dad, Cousin Juanita, and the kids. Litt

the discourse into the spheres of pure

The program in Philadelphia and Los Angeles could as easily have served the purposes of a nursery school Christmas pageant. Around

enforced strict rules of cleanliness,

raising event at the Playboy Mansion, the Republicans staging depositions in favor of domestic bliss, and

loving husband, dutiful father, faithful friend. None of them the kind of man who would cheat an orphan or

What was impressive was the way

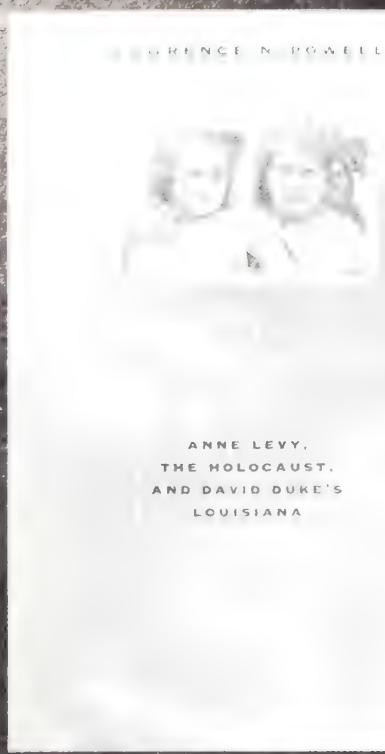
George Bush managed to keep a straight face. Most of the speakers standing up to the TelePrompTers had been bought and sold so many times

those worn by professional race-car drivers, stamped with every logo in the encyclopedia of American commercial enterprise. Their success as

nothing else, they knew how to stomach humiliation and swallow insult

television light, testimonials to the rewards of corporate servitude, talking

INSPIRING, UNFORGETTABLE"



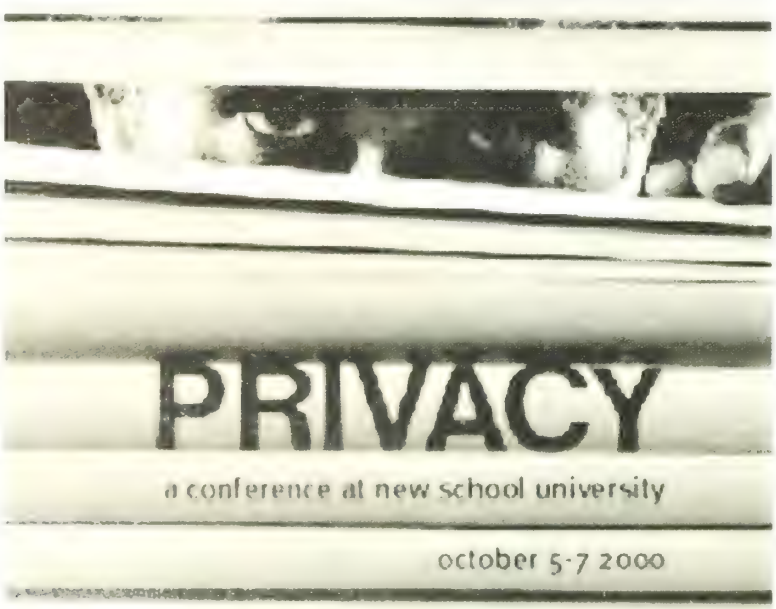
How a childhood survivor of the Holocaust found the courage to publicly confront the specter of Neo-Nazism in America.

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"Makes us understand—in a way no other American writer has—how and why the history of the Holocaust bears so directly and importantly upon contemporary American life. . . . If you want to read one book—just one—about what it means to become an American in the late 20th century, read *Troubled Memory*."—Charles W. Sydnor Jr.*

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As the candidates approached the ening of their triumphant nomina- ns the newspaper prose tended to come increasingly sunny. The effect s especially noticeable in the *New k Times*. Long ago in February, hen it looked as if Governor Bush ght lose yet another primary elec- n to Senator John McCain, the pa- portrayed him as a dull-witted lout, sitant and uncertain, knowing little politics, taking his cues from his fa- er's former privy councillors. By ear- April he had acquired the stature of urprisingly effective speaker, and by e May his accomplishments as gov- nor of Texas were seen to be both tesmanlike and well considered. Dur- the week prior to his coming to iladelphia the *Times* published a dai- report of his progress eastward from e Mississippi River, strewing his path h adjectives of gradually higher qual- , and then, on the morning after his rance into the city famous for the berty Bell, the paper welcomed him its front page as a man of "dazzling arm, tremendous social skills, a bold -confidence, growing political savvy, eat popularity . . ."

The governor on August 3 appar- ly stood a better than even chance becoming the next president of the ited States, and how else do the dia earn their keep (also their free gift he nation's broadcast frequencies) if t by flattering the wealth and wis- n in office? Money is the American esar, the sovereign power whose im is law, and although I know a d many people who complain of the ngement, I don't see that it allows much argument.

During the week between the con- ntions I happened to read Thomas r's biography of Mark Hanna, the o coal merchant who successfully chased, in 1896 and again in 1900, presidential election for Major lliam McKinley. Both Hanna and biographer were as candid as Mel nbler about the terms of the Amer- n political contract, and the book rves a place on the reading lists at vard. At the turn of the twentieth tury Hanna bought votes as open- ly his fellow plutocrats bought rail- d rolling stock, and Beer, writing 928, understood that the American volution had put an end to the old feudal and mercantile systems of moral ity. Dead judges of the King's Bench could not impose a Christian con science on large capital "in the hands of men without traditions and bound to no caste," could not control "this float- ing, detached mass of power which il- lusively seemed free of the earth." Democracy created American capital- ists, as American capital created democracy, and if we live in a society in which the rich govern the poor, it is because we possess no other authority capable of doing so—no aristocracy, no church, no educated class loyal to a code of civic duty.

But we don't like to be reminded of the fact. Somewhere in the attic of our Puritan memory we retain the por- trait of money as a vile slumlord, un- godly and depraved, and the more wealth that the society accumulates the more obsessive our ritual washing of the currency. We didn't use to be so fussy about the behavior and moral rectitude of Caesar's wives. Hanna's politicians were allowed to smoke cig- ars and spit on the floors.

The ancient Romans became more meticulous about the shows of public virtue as their empire embraced more nakedly the joys of private vice, and if the American stock markets continue to perform the miracle of the loaves and the fishes, I see no reason why our presidential candidates shouldn't meet the specifications set for other con- sumer products by the Food and Drug Administration. At Philadelphia and Los Angeles the four nominees did their best to portray themselves as soc- cer moms or pet rabbits, but still the pictures were less than perfect. The money staying in the better hotels complained about a general lack of imperial refinement—the wrong kind of chocolate on the pillows, the music a little loud, too many golfers on the bus—and before long it undoubtedly will demand of its consorts standards of deportment more decorously chaste, levels of emotion more delicately fem- inine. Let the Dow Jones average rise another 4,000 points, and four or eight years from now we can look forward to seeing the candidates in the milk-white robes of vestal virgins, and instead of balloons falling from the rafters of the convention halls, rose petals and the scent of lilies. ■

Schemers, blackguards, braggarts, and the imperial ambitions of Aaron Burr

JEFFERSON *and the* GUN-MEN



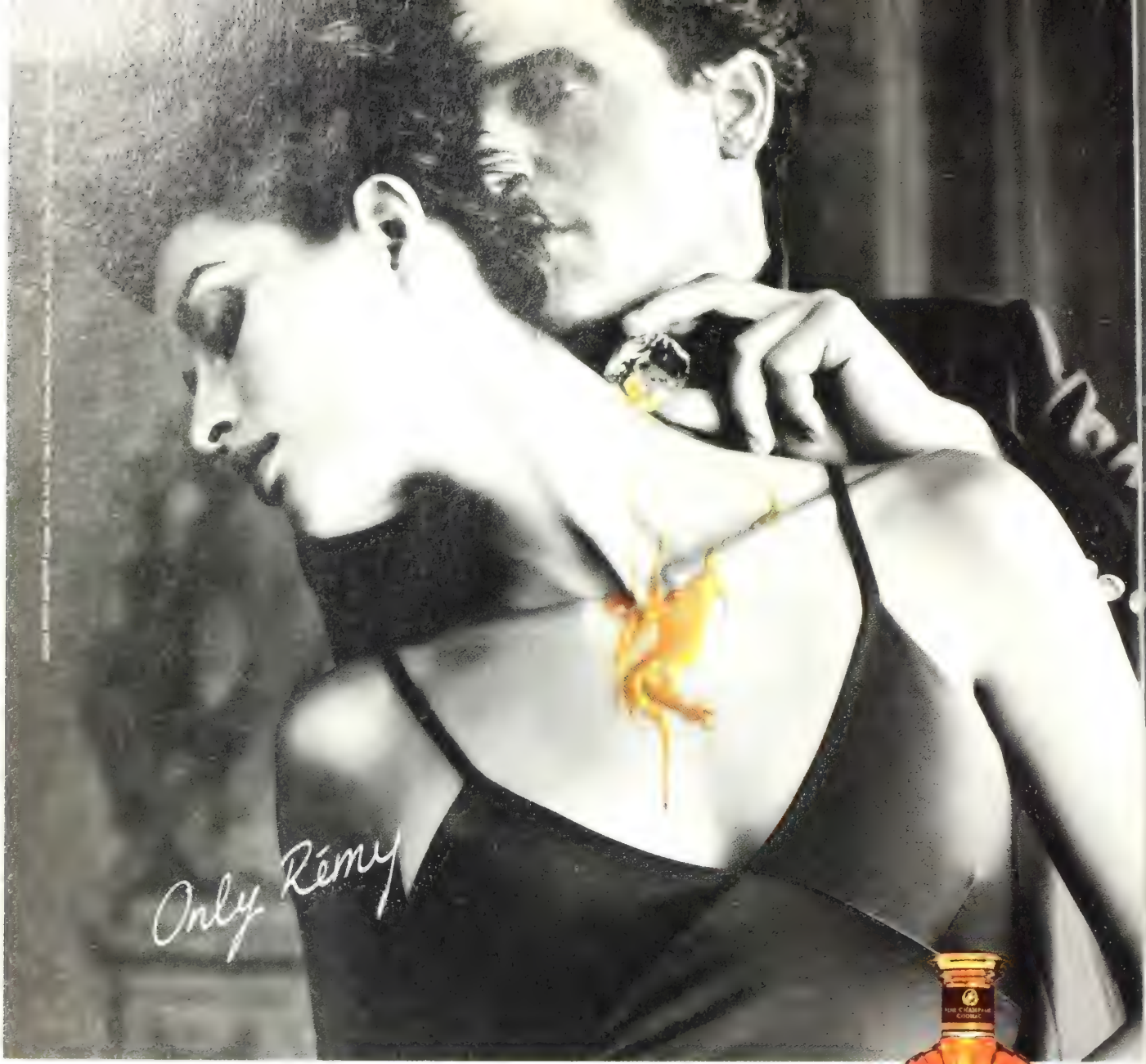
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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of Americans federally registered as presidential candidates this year : 239

Number of G.O.P. presidential conventions since 1911 with a larger percentage of black delegates than last summer's : 5

Percentage of G.O.P. delegates at the 1912 and 2000 conventions, respectively, who identified themselves as black : 6, 4.1

Percentage of House votes cast by Dick Cheney and Al Gore on abortion between 1979 and 1984 that were the same : 93

Number of House abortion bills voted on since 1994 for every campaign-finance bill voted on : 9

Number of years that a Philip Morris consultant was also working as George W. Bush's gubernatorial campaign manager : 2

Damages that 5 tobacco companies were ordered to pay plaintiffs last July in a Florida class-action suit : $144,800,000,000

Months before this that Florida reduced its appeal bond fee from 100 percent of damages to a maximum of $100 million : 2

Number of Colt revolvers that a Texas judge repaired during jury selection in a capital-murder trial last fall : 2

Estimated tons of lead contained in the estimated 315 million computers that will be obsolete by 2004 : 600,000

Tons of SF_5CF_3, a synthetic greenhouse gas, discovered this year to have accumulated in the atmosphere since 1950 : 4,000

Ratio of destructiveness to the ozone layer of a molecule of carbon dioxide to that of a molecule of SF_5CF_3 : 1:18,000

Percentage by which 11 million unexplained lobster deaths reduced Long Island Sound's lobster harvest last fall : 90

Number of U.S. sheep and elk that have tested positive for a variant of mad cow disease in the last year : 60

Percentage change since last year in the number of deaths in Britain due to the human form of mad cow disease : +175

Factor by which pregnancy makes a woman more attractive to malaria-carrying mosquitoes : 2

Price in Kenya of 100 units of nevirapine, a drug that prevents mother-to-child HIV transmission : $874

Price in Norway : $430

Factor by which cocaine production in Colombia has increased since 1995 : 2

Factor by which annual U.S. military aid to Colombia has increased since then : 31

Estimated voter registration rate among Kosovo Albanians last August : 83

stimated voter registration rate among Kosovo Serbs, whose leaders are calling for a boycott of this fall's elections there : 2

amages for war crimes that a U.S. court has ordered Serb leader Radovan Karadzic to pay 14 Bosnian plaintiffs : $745,000,000

mount a Chicago suburb's city council offered a Muslim group last June to abandon its plans for a mosque there : $200,000

Days after the group accepted the offer that the mayor vetoed the deal as "insulting" : 4

Average number of people living per square mile in the Gaza Strip, New Jersey, and Japan, respectively : 8,000, 1,100, 828

Average number of corpses per acre at the University of Tennessee's "body farm," for the study of decomposition : 10

Rank of Ravalli among Montana counties with the largest growth rate in both population and fire damage since 1992 : 1

Estimated number of fake haunted houses operating commercially in the United States last October : 3,000

Number of U.S. houses that are really haunted, according to the Ghost Research Society : 789

Percentage change since 1978 in the number of Americans who say they believe in ghosts : +200

Tons by which the Earth's weight was discovered this year to have been overestimated : 5.8 × 10

Average number of miles by which the Concorde flies closer to the sun than other passenger planes : 4.7

Percentage change since 1986 in the annual number of U.S. patents awarded for a gene or gene fragment : +6,519

Year in which scientists confirmed that subjecting newborn rats to pain may have long-term neurological effects : 2000

Minimum number of months required for a lame duck to fully recover : 3

Column inches that the *New York Times* devoted last August 13 to Joe Lieberman's resemblance to actor Sam Jaffe : 9

inimum number of times that Senator John McCain winked while endorsing George W. Bush at last summer's convention : 5

Number of novels by a current vice presidential candidate's wife wherein a vice president dies in flagrante delicto : 1

Figures sets that preceded the inflation-adjusted, the latest available at Year's End. Sources are listed in the "Harper's Index" section of the Reader.

19,500 ACRES IS A LOT OF OPEN SPACE.

ESPECIALLY WHEN YOUR STRIDE IS ONLY TWO INCHES LONG



The Greater Prairie Chicken is one of several species to benefit from the latest conservation effort by Phillips Petroleum. Together with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Phillips will help restore and manage 19,500 acres in northwestern Missouri, making it a safe haven for high-priority birds. Now breeding populations of Greater Prairie Chickens, Henslow's Sparrows and Bobolinks will have improved chance of survival. And the finished pro will become the first of many bird conservat areas to eventually span the country. It's just more way Phillips works to improve our world and we're known as The Performance Company.

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READINGS

[Interview]

AND DEATH SHALL HAVE ITS DOMINION

From an interview broadcast last spring on Caracol, a Colombian television network, with Carlos Castaño, the leader of the country's main right-wing paramilitary group, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia. In the last decade, Colombia's civil war, the longest-running internal conflict in Latin America, has claimed 35,000 lives and displaced some 1.5 million people. Castaño is accused of overseeing 1,000 deaths last year. Colombia's right-wing paramilitaries, which were banned in 1989, originally were sanctioned by the government and charged with defending businesses and landowners from leftist guerrillas. Immediately after this interview aired, a poll revealed that 38 percent of those questioned said their image of Castaño had improved. Translated from the Spanish by Raluca Georgescu.

CARACOL: Whom do you admit having killed?

CASTAÑO: The truth is that I have done things that I cannot talk about.

CARACOL: Are there harsher people than you in the commando?

CASTAÑO: For God's sake, of course there are.

CARACOL: Do you make errors?

CASTAÑO: Of course one can make mistakes. There are cases in which we should have acted more prudently. For three years, for example, we acted in the belief that those who voluntarily collaborated with the guerrillas should be military objectives. Nowadays they aren't really a military objective for us. We have tried on our side to correct things.

CARACOL: Doesn't the United Self-Defense army use the same methods of fighting as the guerrillas who surround a town, bomb it, and massacre its population?

CASTAÑO: It may be that it looks the same, but they are completely different things. It hurts to see things like that happening in Bojayá—of course it does—but given the conditions in conflict it's almost inevitable that people die, that civilians who are subversive will be murdered.

CARACOL: What about when the United Self-Defense troops go to an unarmed village, call people out from a list of names, torture, and then shoot them?

CASTAÑO: What's being said about torture is fiction. This torture is not carried out by the United Self-Defense. This is a lie. That in one case one person is shot—it's possible, yes. For us the guerrillas are a military objective, and it's important to stay well informed about the actions of the subversives. The guerrillas also kill defenseless people. This is a war. We would like to change our methods, though. We would like to find a way to make such a dirty war into a fairer war.

CARACOL: You talk about the enemy's who attacks in a cowardly way, who shoots from behind. Isn't it cowardly to arrive in a town by night, to take out farmers whom you consider part of the guerrilla forces, and to kill them?

CASTAÑO: I think it is deplorable to be obliged by a certain situation to do something like

the way they should? For example, why do [illegible] why do they compromise the civilian population [illegible] guerrillas voluntarily? They help them out of fear, intimidation, pressure, terror. If the guerrillas did not involve the population and [illegible] act on the same terms.

CARACOL: Do you conduct such barbaric acts as beheadings or other mutilations?

[illegible] politics of our organization, I don't want to . . . These are crimes that I always try to investigate and punish. Realistically, but there can be exceptional cases in which some brutality could have been committed. But for it to go unpunished is exceptional. If someone is an enemy, we have to kill him; we have to kill him, but we don't have to torture him.

CARACOL: Do you acknowledge that sometimes many innocent people die in these mass killings?

[illegible] a war. It's inevitable, it's painful. Many days ago someone asked me if children died in the incursion in Bolívar. I said, categorically, [illegible] girl. This upsets anyone, it upsets me to hear that something like this has happened.

Have you ever cried?

Yes. I cry a lot. I cry in anger, in disappointment, when there's been a betrayal. I [illegible] Anything makes me cry.

Have you cried for the death of a human being?

Of course. Please.

[illegible]: Are you a rich man?

[illegible] my brother has another farm, and the Castaño family has some land.

[illegible]: Your father was captured and murdered by the FARC [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia]. Brothers also?

[illegible] Reynaldo was killed by the FARC, but while defending himself. Horacio too, defending himself. Fidel, defending himself. But there are some actions that I can't forgive. They [illegible] dragged her out and beheaded from the car. They thought she was going to [illegible]

[illegible] It would be disturbing. It would be [illegible] day, I think, they were human beings too. They had families like yours or mine. Even if they were subversive, they died, they were killed by machine guns. And I say, why does this have to happen? This is why it makes me really sad to have to use such drastic methods in order to bring down the FARC.

CARACOL: How do you defend yourself against those who say that Carlos Castaño and the United Self-Defense defend the rich landowners, the oligarchs, the wealthy businessmen who traffic drugs?

CASTAÑO: Yes, they say that. It is not true. The oligarchy has its own self-defense: the army and the police. Here in Colombia, the economic powers have always had someone to protect them. The United Self-Defense is defending the interests of the Colombian middle class: the rice farmer, the banana farmer, the cotton farmer, the common citizen, and many, many peasants. I'm not going to defend the drug traffickers, but I do protect the Colombian people's goods. And those who receive protection have to pay. In an area with 100 farms, 20 will belong to drug traffickers.

CARACOL: And they all pay you, the hundred of them?

CASTAÑO: Yes, exactly one hundred of them have to pay me.

CARACOL: They don't voluntarily pay you.

CASTAÑO: We ask for a war tax, as the guerrillas do. Only I do it with more humanity. I'm their friend. They can bargain. They can refuse to pay or they can pay later, but, yes, they have to pay it all.

CARACOL: And if they don't pay it?

CASTAÑO: And if a person doesn't pay, we tell him, look, you have cattle here, or you can sell this part of the land and do it this way.

CARACOL: Who gives the quote? Who sets the war tax, you or your people?

[illegible] I tell people, this is how much the security of this region costs. I assume responsibility. I tell them, you'll have so many people protecting you, you have to give them a little remuneration for their families. They can easily get imprisoned, they can easily . . . One falls dead, there is a widow, one has to help her during so many months because, because there is a certain agreement. You have to gather this amount of money. It is my responsibility. I gather it.

What is the estimated budget of the United Self Defense Forces of Colombia?

[illegible] It costs more in the regions where there are more problems. With cocaine it's been easy, for example. The cocaine production in Catatumbo has been financing the Self-Defense in Córdoba. It supported 3,200 men. The drug market finances proba-



Untitled (#55)," a photograph by Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami, is [illegible] *Kiarostami's most recent film is* The Wind Will Carry Us.

by 70 percent of our operations, as compared with 90 percent, more or less, for the guerrillas. We aren't drug traffickers. But pretending that the Colombian conflict and drug trafficking are not interrelated would be a fallacy.

CARACOL: Don't you feel like a bandit?

CASTAÑO: Not at all, not at all.

CARACOL: But you are conspiring against the state.

CASTAÑO: Look, I don't need to delegitimize the state—the state is doing that by itself.

CARACOL: But the constitution says that arms can be used legally only by the army and their forces.

CASTAÑO: But the constitution also says that when the army is incapable of fulfilling its function to supply protection, security, harmony in a country, then the citizenry has the right to disregard the authority of the state.

CARACOL: Where does the constitution say this?

CASTAÑO: I think that a universal constitution must say this.

[Confessions]

THIS IS YOUR WAR ON DRUGS

From an article on [illegible] *military published in the January/February 2000 issue of the* Index on Censorship. *"Specifically, President Clinton* [illegible] *$1.3 billion aid package* [illegible] *ment that includes military equipment, intelligence resources* [illegible]

What are your memories of your first days in the army?

We were trained in [illegible] tries. They told us that [illegible] human rights was a guerrilla. Anyone who was a peasant was also a guerrilla as far as we were concerned. They trained us to kill. Whenever [illegible] took [illegible]

Whenever there was a military target and you didn't kill anyone, you had to take back a body.

When there was fighting we [illegible] and when it was all over we would stay in the mountains as infiltrators or ambushers. The last time we killed an old man, a hunchback. We were after a guerrilla commander. We couldn't find him, so we grabbed an old man who had the same surname on his ID card. My lieutenant told me to kill him if I [illegible] and I said, "If I have to, I have to." But he gave the order to another soldier.

And [illegible] in combat?

It was a set-up: simulated crossfire in the middle of the mountains. You set off an alarm, four or five shots from each soldier. It's a sham, but the lieutenant gets a promotion.

[illegible] the numbers of bodies you [illegible] back?

I had the experience of the way things were when we were in a joint operation with the Bárbaros battalion, which I think is from the Magdalena. There had been fighting in the Sierra Nevada, fierce, bloody combat with the guerrillas. The battalion had blocked the guerrillas' supply routes, working with the paramilitaries. The guerrillas were starting to [illegible] and then retreated, and the paramilitaries went in with [illegible].

One day two paramilitaries arrived and took a couple of pistols that had belonged to the guerrilla we'd captured. They needed guns that couldn't be traced because there was an investigation going on. They stayed in the battalion for seven days, training us. We were always chatting with them, asking them what they had done. They offered us money and said that as soon as we left the military we could join them.

How much does a paramilitary earn?

At the start they earn about 340,000 pesos (around $160). A really fearless killer will get promoted to leader, and his wages will go up. When the paramilitaries get a tip-off, they travel together in the battalion's transport, the army on one side, them on the other.

The paramilitary I was talking to asked why I didn't work with them. He knew that I was from the local barrios and that I would know where the guerrilla commanders and collaborators lived. He said: "Why don't you earn some good money, you idiot?"

And how does the paramilitaries' training continue?

I don't know where they do their training; the information is closely guarded. They always take reservists because then they are already trained. They say that the first thing you have to do when you get there is kill someone in cold blood. It brainwashes you. It was the paramilitaries who taught us how to torture people.

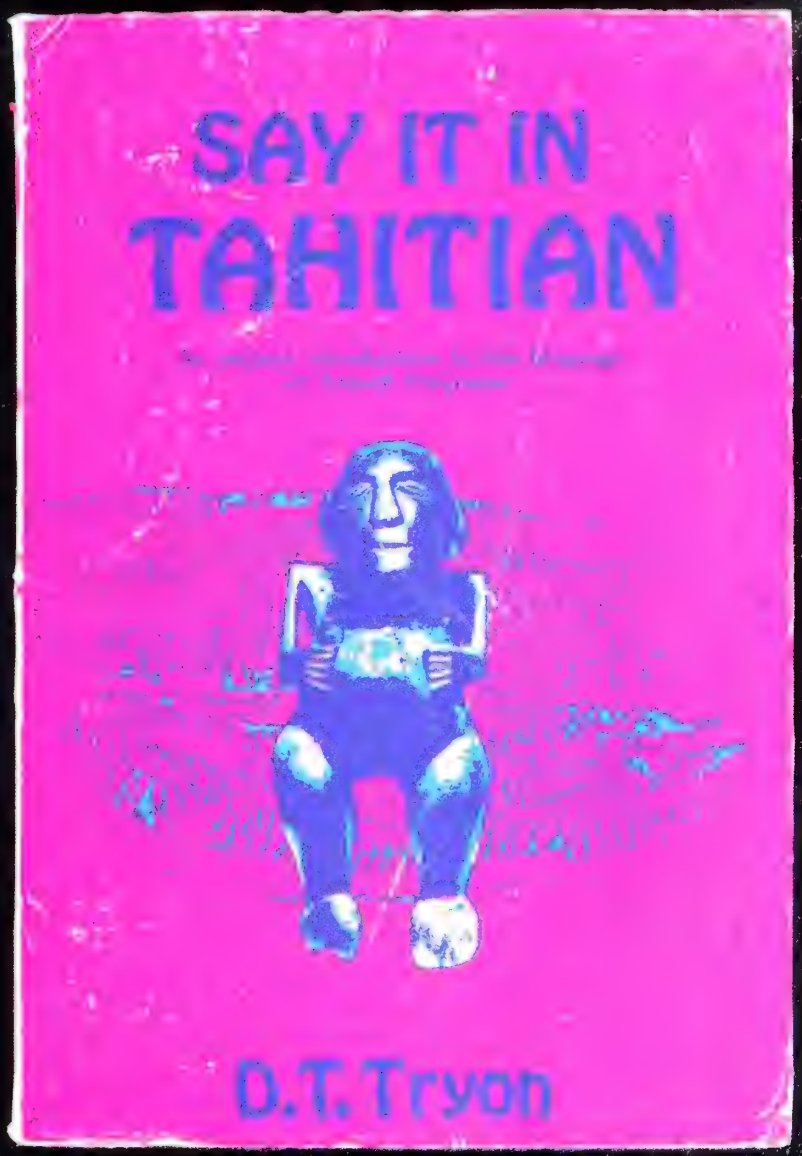
What did they tell you?

To torture someone you tie them up and give them electric shocks on the tongue to make them talk. When they refuse to talk, you use those big long needles [*he indicates the size of his index finger*] and stab the needles through their nails. Then you strip them and make them sit on a block of ice. And when they still won't give you information, you castrate them and pour acid over them so that they end up completely disfigured. The paramilitaries have always done it. Recently, in Cesar, they burned a whole family with acid. I was in the battalion there, and a soldier told me about it. He said the son was a guerrilla and that the paramilitaries were furious with him because he had killed one of their commanders. So they went into the house and dragged out the whole family. There were three young kids, and they threw acid on all of them. Acid that turns a person black.

Who are the informers?

They are always volunteers. If you have a good tip-off you go to the battalion, and they give you camouflage and let you direct the op-

August 29, 1978. Left on beach after one too many mai tais.



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TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL

I sent last year to "Angel" Maturmo

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

one, the paramilitaries would soon send some one for me.

What age are most of the paramilitaries?

Mostly young—mainly reservists. The leaders are older. They're bloodthirsty. The counter-guerrilla paramilitaries carry chain saws with them, about this size [*he indicates his forearm*], for cutting people up. Any paramilitary that goes on operations takes one with him. They have mass graves over in Barranca.

What is life like for young people in the barrios?

For young people here it's all about being in the guerrillas, carrying a gun, intimidating civilians. They want to feel good. But when they have to fight they can't. They look down on me because I've just left. I won't do anyone any favors, won't hang around with them. Why would I want to get involved in that stuff? If I decide to join the guerrillas, I'll take my gun and go to the mountains. But not here, because here they only kill innocent people.

[Essay]

SHAPES OF COURAGE

Adapted from The Mystery of Courage, *by William Ian Miller, published in September by Harvard University Press. Miller, a professor of law at the University of Michigan, is the author of* The Anatomy of Disgust, *among other books; his essay "The Chagrin of the Near Miss" appeared in the June 1999 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

All virtues have histories and sociologies; they also have physiologies. We attribute virtue to healthy and beautiful bodies, and vice to ugly and sickly ones. Even virtues that only indirectly touch on embodied existence—benevolence, graciousness, and intellectual virtues—still have to overcome the reluctance in others to cede merit to those whose physicality displeases. If even abstract intellectual and moral virtues seem to fit certain body types better than others, then what of those virtues and vices that implicate the body directly? Courage, cowardice, and the virtues and vices that govern sex and sexuality put the body, its urges and behaviors, front and center. Even moral courage is not disembodied; it makes little sense to us independent of metaphors and the very fact of standing tall, standing up, standing firm, of not taking it lying down.

Courage and cowardice star in moral narratives, in epic, romance, tragedy, and comedy. We have traditions that dictate the conventional casting, dressing them up so that we know them when we see them. And since there is a divorced image of what the courageous person and the coward look like, ironies and comedies abound when the body is cast against moral type. We expect that the well-built, big, strong man has a body that predicts courage; the skinny, spindly guy, one that predicts timidity and probable cowardice. The short, if stocky, are also thought to be tough as nails; and not all fat means cowardice: think of the fat that graces the guts of the guys on Harleys. We distinguish, it seems, between soft fat and hard fat, the former gained by eating big through weakness of will, the latter by drinking big with a will to violence. One got chosen last in games; the other was the guy no one could bring down, the guy for whom the receipt of pain was largely hypothetical, an idea that came to him indirectly via the pleasure he took in dealing it out to others.

Fatness is considered such a vice that although we may know fat people to be tough on occasion, we are reluctant to grant them any virtue for it (few virtues are allowed the fat: joviality and perhaps generosity). Thus we are not surprised to read, in Frederick Downs's *The Killing Zone*, that a medic who forfeited the love of his unit would also be fat, his other deficiencies seeming to be wholly predicted by his bodily failings. "Unfortunately Doc looked like the individual he acted. He had pimples and was overweight . . . and would not carry his load." So wedded are we to the moral limits of fat people that we will engage in all kinds of self-deceptions to prevent any dissonance from disrupting our commitment to what certain types of deeply moral, deeply thoughtful characters must not look like. Thus when Gertrude declares Hamlet "fat and scant of breath" during his duel with Laertes, modern editors have come to the rescue with glosses to show that "fat" meant sweaty and out of shape, but manifestly not fat. Hamlet fat? No way.

There is a complex moral history to fatness: it was always associated with gluttony, and gluttony was never held to predict courage. And although it did not predict cowardice either, it was hardly an accident that our leading literary glutton is also our leading literary coward: Falstaff, that "obscene greasy tallow-catch," a "roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly," so fat that he "lards the lean earth as he walks along," is also a "coward on instinct," a "sanguine coward," a "true bred coward." Courage, remember, was the prerogative of the nobles, who enjoyed their feasts, the mere fact of being able to afford to eat well being a privilege of their condition. But, as we see in *Beowulf*, feasts were cast in the form of com-

The Wetlands That Almost Disappeared.

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People Do.


NELSON

Doing Battle, however, Paul Fussell does penance for the treatment the short and fat Second Lieutenant Abe Goldman got at his and everyone else's hands ("his arrival brought joy to every anti-Semite in the battalion"). Goldman redeems himself by showing great courage under fire and great dignity when wounded. Goldman played according to type until it mattered, and, in his case, Jewishness was added to the burden that shortness and fatness had already imposed on his virtue.

It is not just the fat who suffer from the burden of cowardice but the short and the thin, unless sinewy; the thin may suffer even more than the short if they are tall, and hence step into the category of geekiness. Tallness, however, is usually a savior, for if a fat person is also tall, he is metamorphosed into "big," which reopens all kinds of moral possibility. If the fat are also politically powerful, they command deference for their power if not for their fat, as the case of Winston Churchill might attest. Power transforms fat into what the Germans call *stattlich*, which English only partly captures by a combination of "portly" and "imposing."

When wretched physical specimens do great things, it is a matter of special note, and woe to the person whose body marks him for grand things but who then turns tail, for he must suffer more than the disgrace that awaits the average coward; he must suffer the joy his failure gives to those who have always felt themselves diminished in his presence, envious of his physicality. In *Recollections of Rifleman Bowlby*, Bowlby, hardly a hero himself, is not quite displeased that Meredith, the biggest brawler in the company, is so scared of getting killed that he won't join the attack. William Manchester follows suit in delighting in the collapse of the unit tough guy under artillery fire, and even though he had nothing but contempt for his fat lieutenant, as we saw, he insisted that those "good athletes" with their perfect bodies fought no better than "ectomorphs and endomorphs." Manchester takes care to note, too, that although he was nicknamed Slim for his slight build, he was known in his unit for the enviable size of his penis. Some body parts, it is believed, can compensate for the shortcomings of others.

However justifiable, so tenacious are the beliefs about the relation of body type to courage that they have survived unabashedly the equalizing power of force multipliers like guns. The trigger finger of a ninety-eight-pound weakling should be as effective as a bodybuilder's. But the skinny guy with a gun represents mentally what he is, overcompensating for his lack of natural endowment, trying too hard, playing the fool.

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Untitled, 2003. Oil on canvas, 72 x 96". Installation view of Kara Walker's exhibition at Rochlitz Hall gallery in Brooklyn.

PROJECT

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[illegible] *the intense multiplicity of it. Any theories you make that come to your mind when you think about the gang bang.*"

I think it's really close to sports, specifically team sports, you know? But the gang bang itself is almost like a reenactment of a historical event: the Messalina event. Messalina was the wife of the Emperor Claudius, and she decided to challenge the most famous prostitute of Rome to a gang bang. She held it in the town square and invited "friends, Romans, and countrymen" over to participate, and of course she won because she was the empress. This is a [illegible] of course.

Translated into America, in this time and [illegible] I think the American religion is sports, [illegible] Hall. And I think the gang bang

itself has the same sort of cheesy theatricality, you know, the pomp and circumstance. And of course there's me, right in the center. But because the event is so much about male bonding, I think my presence is only supposed to guarantee the heterosexuality of the event. Really, most of the interaction that's going on is between the men. So it's a very homoerotic event.

Would participants admit to its homoeroticism, do you think?

I don't think so, but at some point the guys are standing in line, cruising each other, you know, checking each other out, kind of like, "Hey, he's hard, I'm not; I better get hard soon—whoa, look at him! Isn't he big." That sort of thing. So it becomes really competitive between the men, and there's a certain amount of backslapping going on.

You gave someone a great quote about your gang bang: "Once you put something out there, people can interpret it any way they like—nothing contains a specific meaning; nothing is essentially degrading for anybody."

Well, I think the meaning of the gang bang continues to evolve, and of course I personally think that an event itself is less interesting than the discourse surrounding it. If you look at the press about the gang bang when it first came out, it's very different from the sort of press that it's receiving right now, as evidenced by the fact that you're writing this article, you know, getting beyond the sensationalism, the Fox TV sort of reaction. So I think it's constantly evolving. I've gotten to the point where I'm more interested in seeing how this thing plays out, how it's evolving, how it's being adapted to the current craze about wealth, about prosperity.

Like the gang bang is kind of analogous to an initial public offering in a sexual commodity . . .

Exactly. It's incredibly contemporary in that sense. You know, it's not about ideas like decadence, for example; or even, going all the way back, fertility. It's about numbers; it's about commerce. It's about information. And of course, it's a completely false act. It reminds me of scientists who will develop a 120th element that lasts for about four seconds. This element doesn't actually exist, just like the gang bang doesn't actually exist, but it's developing the element for a momentary piece of time that enables this experiment to get started. It's like theoretical physics and conceptual art in that sense.

What do you think about the reliability of numbers in gang bang reporting?

People are taking great license with what they're describing as actual sex with [illegible] men. Right from the start it wasn't really about the sex or how much sex, it's about how many men. It's about statistics, just like sports. And so really the numbers just sell the tape. And even if they didn't have that many guys in the room, they're going to come out with the numbers. It's very much a scam.

Do people within the porn community embrace you for your gang bang?

Oh no, they dislike me intensely for it. Some even thought it shouldn't be allowed. And what cracks me up is that, for once, the porn industry, the feminists, and the religious right were in complete agreement that this is totally atrocious. I just like the delicious irony of that.

Actually, USC, the college that I went to, had this Christian paper and they had to list the ten worst things that happened in the 1990s, and I think I came in at number seven, with Bill Clinton at number five.

Wow, so you almost beat Clinton?

Yeah, almost.

Porn producers are on a bit of a crusade recently to push extreme-sex boundaries. Do you fear that your video opened that door a little bit? Do you feel any responsibility for addressing this trend?

I feel really ambivalent about this whole extreme-porn thing. Pushing things to the extreme—I think that is just really academic. It's like the Marquis de Sade, where *The 120 Days of Sodom* is very much an intellectual exercise—okay, so we put a monkey and a woman, and this and that and this together, and this is what happens.

It's like mathematics; it's getting more and more cerebral. Ironically, a lot of the so-called art porn is much less academic, because it's more visually driven. It's not so much about acts and ideas as it is about how these visuals work with each other to make it more erotic.

Do you find the porn industry a big [illegible] to keep working in?

No, not really. I think that it's very parochial. There's a big difference between my interest in pornography and my feelings about the porn industry, you know? I want to try other things. I would consider doing a gang bang as much of an experiment as, say, monogamy, for example. I have my own prejudices right here. I'm just laying it out on the table. I'm like your typical middle-class suburban kid. Gang bang and sexual promiscuity notwithstanding.

DIGITAL MILLENNIUM THOUGHT CRIMES

Number of people who have been to space: 395

THE HARPER'S INDEX BOOK

— VOLUME I —

Average number of dimples on a golf ball: 415

Chance that an American would rather be mugged than audited: 1 in 2

Gallons of chewing gum scraped up each year by the Statue of Liberty's maintenance crew: 39

That's just a sampling of the thousands of eyebrow-raising statistics in the third edition of *The Harper's Index Book*–an all-new collection of the best of Harper's Index, arguably the most original (and most imitated) invention in magazine journalism.

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I can't answer the question.

A [illegible]: I don't know what the answer is.

[illegible] understand the question?

[illegible]: Do you understand the question?

VALENTI: Not really.

[illegible] know whether or not you can take a video that you make a duplicate, and put that on the Internet?

I don't know.

Has any attempt been made to stop that [illegible] from posting any linking sites, to your knowledge?

I don't know.

Do you know anything about how this particular defendant was the defendant arrested in the New York case?

I don't know.

Let me direct your attention to Exhibit 23, which is your statement of October 28, [illegible] "piracy is a billion-dollar worldwide problem and growing."

I see that.

Can you tell me if you have any information whether one penny of that [illegible] DeCSS?

I don't know.

Do you know what a DVD burner is?

I have heard the term, but I really don't know what it means.

All right. Now let's mark as Exhibit [illegible] Screen Digest [illegible].

[illegible]: Do you [illegible] this statement [illegible] to make people [illegible] protect [illegible]?

[illegible]: No.

[illegible]

VALENTI: I'm not a [illegible] I don't know.

[illegible] DeCSS?

[illegible]

MPAA ever been told of or ever seen a film, pirated or not, that has come from a DVD through DeCSS?

VALENTI: I don't recall.

[illegible]: Do you know of one person who has ever seen a film that has been decrypted from a DVD through DeCSS? One person?

VALENTI: I don't recall.

GARBUS: Thank you very much. That's the end of the deposition.

VALENTI: Thank you, Mr. Garbus. Appreciate it very much.

[Negotiation]

WHAT IS THIS, CANADA?

From the transcript of a discussion between representatives of the Motion Picture Association of America ratings board and Paramount Pictures concerning the rating of the movie South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut. *The transcript, which was provided by* South Park *co-creator Matt Stone, was printed in* Digital Coast Reporter *last summer.*

[illegible]: The board feels it is NC-17 at this stage, with some of the— You're not wanting to release it with anything but an R, are you?

[illegible]: It's going to be an R. Right.

[illegible]: Among other things was the reference to "fisting."

[illegible]: Another thing, what is going on in the Ping-Pong area with Winona Ryder?

JERRY: I think the balls are being shot out by an unseen vagina.

[illegible]: The Ping-Pong balls are supposed to look like they're coming from her vagina, but she stands up and you know that they're not. She's holding a paddle in her hand, and you'll see that she's hitting them with the paddle.

[illegible]: There's a whole thing about being fucked by God.

[illegible]: Are you referring to the line, "God has fucked me in the ass"?

[illegible]: Yes.

[illegible] that the only reason it is also, "God is the biggest bitch of them all." "Is that okay."

I would suggest the "God fucking me in the ass" [illegible] the problem. "Fucking me up the ass" is much more graphic. "Bitch of all" is just irreverent. I don't see how that could end up being NC-17.

[illegible]: The scene goes on for a long time.

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Lecture 7 – Skepticism and Fanaticism – Blaise Pascal
Lecture 8 – Newton's Discovery
Lecture 9 – The Newtonian Revolution
Lecture 10 – John Locke – The Revolution in Knowledge
Lecture 11 – The Lockean Moment
Lecture 12 – Skepticism and Calvinism – Pierre Bayle

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Lecture 13 – The Moderns – The Generation of 1680-1715
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deep you'll feel pressure on your lungs

song that the chef was singing.

mentioned by some people, the scene where

it could get to R, but a majority think that if

[FICTION]

REVENGE OF WOLVERINE

eth Century Fox when the film was in develop-

his story "Son of the Wolfman" appeared in

lies of blue pixels. From the blur of elec-

uttered pickup

seen wailing. The young man desperately tries to coax more speed out of his rattling truck. Twilit mountains loom behind a deserted gas station wasting its light on the desert evening. Faint strains of "Silent Night" from the office radio. The dust of the two vehicles hangs, motionless.

THE FIRST OF THE SNOWMOBILES: Ribbons of diamond dust twist across a white expanse. Gray winter sky, distant black treeline. A figure runs across the waste, naked, bleeding from a dozen wounds, caught in the terrible jaw of the mountains. A small, muscular man, his limbs thatched with black hair.

Forty men in white uniforms, riding forty white maglev pursuit vehicles, like treadless snowmobiles skimming along on a superconducted cushion of force, fan out across the mountainside behind him. They are gaining rapidly on the naked man. Then the lead vehicle slows and circles around. Its driver points to his helmet and waves them back.

The man runs, scrabbling across the rocky outcrops, half-mad with pain and his longing to reach the shelter of the trees. He stops running, sucking in lungfuls of sharp air. The drone of the snowskimmers fades. He looks up at the sky, listening. His nostrils flare. Soon there is nothing to hear or see but snow and wind. Yet he is alarmed. He begins to run again, toward the treeline, leaving a trail of bright blood. A moment later, we hear the faint thumping of a helicopter.

THE SKY OVER MISSION VIEJO, CALIFORNIA: A police chopper circles lazily over a sea of red-tile roofs. The pilot wears a Santa hat. As he makes a pass over a small cul-de-sac, we tilt down to see the street below, awash in synthetic cheer: an unofficial but hard-fought yearly contest to out-reindeer, out-elf, and out-Jesus the neighbors. The home of this year's winners: the Lees. Five thousand dollars' worth of lights and lawn ornaments. A crèche scene like the Rat Pack gathered round to adore the infant Liberace.

THE LEES' LIVING ROOM: Fabulous plastic tree, mountain of gifts. Irish setter asleep next to a gas fire, at the feet of a pipe-smoking dad, an Asian man, in tweeds, standing by the tree, stringing popcorn. Suddenly he tenses, pulls a Glock 9mm from his shoulder holster, whirls, ready to kill. But it's just his lovely wife, also Asian, carrying a tray of homemade cookies. They both smile. He shakes his head sheepishly as he reholsters the gun. He puts his arm around her and they stand by the window, their perfect mom and dad faces hellish in the light coming from their front lawn.

IN THE DESERT: The pickup pulls off the desert highway at a stand of cottonwoods, cuts its one headlight. Bumps along toward a distant cluster of lights. The ambulance passes right by. The pickup pulls up in front of a small collec-

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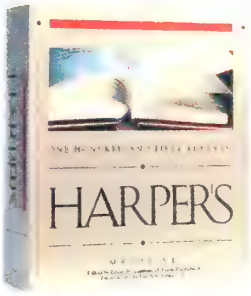
The Table of Contents is stunning in its range: Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, Eudora Welty, John Cheever, Philip Roth, John Updike, Norman Mailer, David Mamet, Annie Dillard, and Tom Wolfe–and scores of other writers and artists who have made an indelible impression on America's literary history.

The volume contains more than 200 images including photographs, line art, and works originally published in the magazine by Frederic Remington, Winslow Homer, Edwin Abbey, Charles Dana Gibson, Edward Gorey, Maxfield Parrish, Leroy Neiman, Howard Pyle, Arthur Rackham, Edward Searle, Saul Steinberg, James Thurber, and Andy Warhol.

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Edward Penfield's "Christmas" poster, created to promote the December 1895 issue of Harper's Magazine. Penfield (1866-1925) was one of America's most highly influential illustrators and poster artists, widely credited with bringing abstraction to commercial art through boldly simplified shapes. An eight-page full color portfolio of his promotional posters for Harper's is featured in An American Album.

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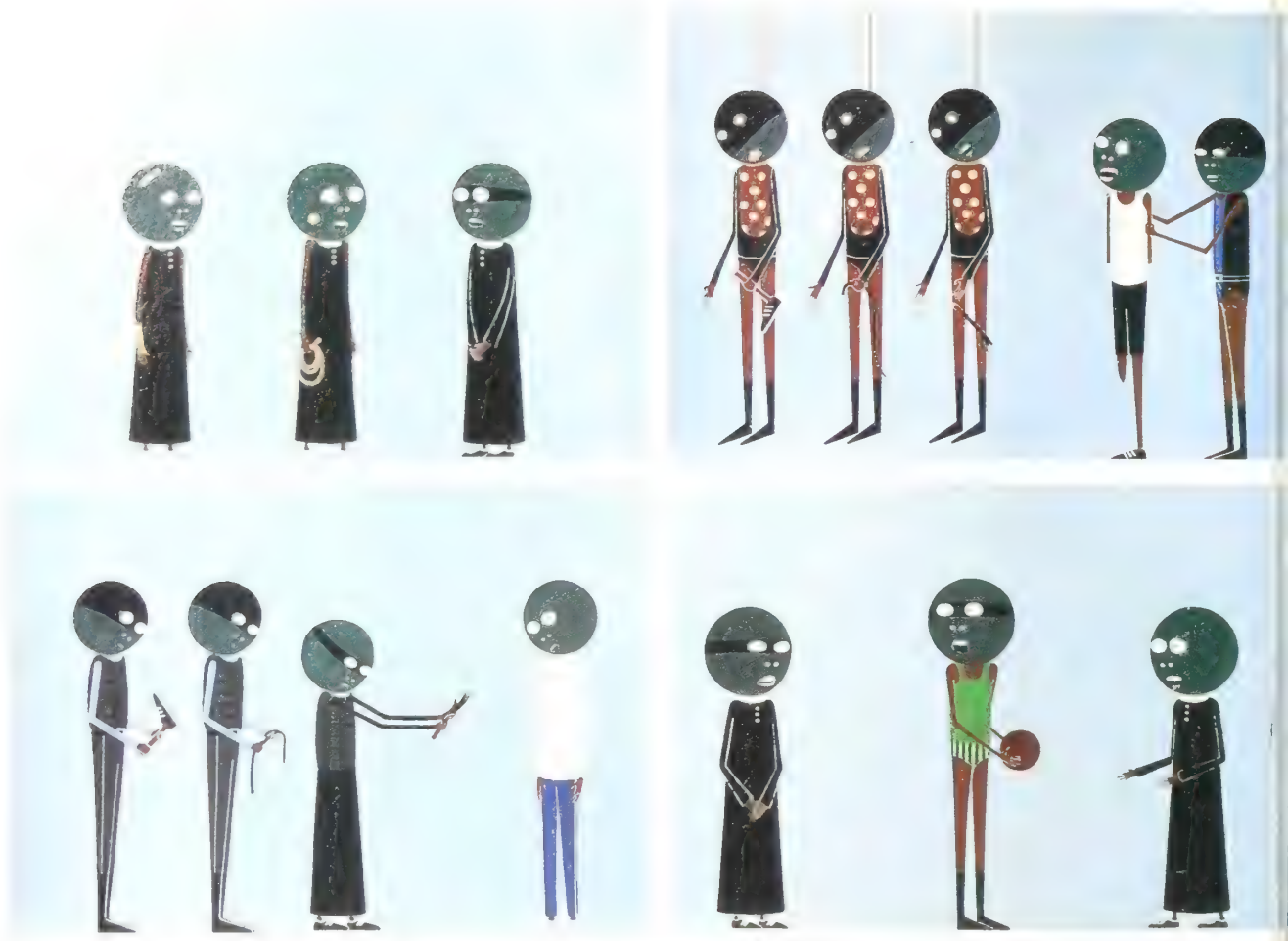
60 million
unexploded

beneath the

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little shell-shocked, perhaps. There's a spark like him at once. We sense from the first that

her stuffed monkey, rocks, trying to think what to do. Looks at the monkey's face. It has two button eyes. She throws it down. Goes to the door and opens it. Hears her parents talking in low ominous whispers. Goes back into her room and grabs her mind; she stuffs some clothes and other belongings into a knapsack, grabs her rollerblades, and goes out the window. As she skates away, her parents lean out of the window. Her father touches a place on his neck, and his benevolent face wavers and disappears. He is a blond-looking blond man. The mother touches her neck, and her sweet face disappears. She is a pale blonde woman. The man looks disgusted. "I'd better call Mr. Montclair."

From this point we follow two separate stories until they merge. The first story is about how the damaged man with claws and metal bones enters the world of Professor Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters and tries to puzzle out its mys-

The X-men conceal their true natures from

him, as they do from the rest of the world. Logan's manner is mild, battled, tentative. He gives flashes of his true self (and there is a small matter of those adamantium claws). Logan resists all efforts to recover his memory, unconsciously afraid of what he will find, and tries to ingratiate himself, with uneven results, with the X-men. Henry runs a series of medical and genetic tests on him, and comes to realize that somehow Logan has been horribly altered.

Life at the Xavier school seems idyllic and sweet, but Logan senses something is amiss. Something odd about these people. We meet and get to know the other "Gifted Youngsters" as people, not as superpowered mutants. Then Logan catches a glimpse of Kurt Wagner with his "image inducer" turned off, and the smiling blond German turns out to be a blue-skinned, pointy-eared, six-fingered elf-man. He starts spying, and when he sees the team training in the Danger Room, their powers fully unleashed, he learns the truth but doesn't let on.

The X-men leave to attend a secret conclave of mutants, held in a private club in NYC, Mendel's, that caters to mutants. The U.S. Congress is debating implementation of a Mutant Registration and Control Act, and the loosely associated, fractious mutant leadership has come to debate policy. Logan, uninvited, trails his friends. This is a visually rich scene, a feast of mutants, half-*Godfather*, half-*Star Wars*. It is proposed that a representative group of mutants appear before the Mutant Affairs Committee to testify on behalf of mutants, but as this would involve revealing their identities, and seems chancy at best, the proposal is rejected. Recent operations by the X-men and other groups attempting to rescue, protect, and assist mutants have backfired or gone wrong, resulting in increased hostility toward mutants. Therefore it is agreed, not without rancor, that with antimutant sentiment at a fever pitch, the various groups cease all activities that might attract public notice and disfavor, in the greater long-term interest of mutant welfare. At this point the meeting is disrupted by a Breeding and Form Committee, a death squad of the mysterious League of Gentlemen. Logan, hoping to prove himself, reveals himself and repels the attack. But in so doing he is injured—he is not himself, can't generate a berserker rage—and his blood sprays several people, among them Jean.

When they get back to the mansion, Logan, healing, asks to be allowed to join them. They're about to accept him when Henry McCoy enters and announces that his study of Logan shows that he is carrying a virus that breaks down the DNA of mutants; and that Jean, and possibly others, have now been infected. As far as Hank can tell, they may have a week before Jean starts to die. Logan's [illegible] ing factor seems to be protecting him—the virus was so weakened in his body that [illegible] direct contact with his blood could [illegible] have been infected. Jean, on the other hand, can spread the disease through casual bodily contact. She must quarantine herself and, when this is not practical, encase herself in a telekinetic body-shield. Only Logan will be able to have close contact with her.

Logan is disbelieving; the others regard him

[Petition]

CROATOAN

From a lawsuit filed last June by Larry Bryant president of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy against James S. Gilmore, governor of Virginia

Besides the defendant's moral obligation under the U.S. Constitution, whereby he ought to and can help the U.S. government protect all the states from invasion, he has a legal obligation to proceed unilaterally with all deliberate speed to identify, assess, and repel the clandestine invasion of UFOs within Virginia.

The Code of Virginia makes no distinction between an abduction perpetrated by a fellow citizen of Earth or by some extraterrestrial entity sent here to conduct invasive activity upon unsuspecting and unprotected citizens. The defendant knows that Virginia law prohibits (and punishes) abducting, torturing, falsely imprisoning, wantonly impregnating, and nonconsensually surgically altering (via implants) a person. He also knows that he has the power (and the duty) to repel these invasive activities of apparently alien-originated UFO encounters; yet he refuses even to acknowledge the existence of the invasion.

Thus, the invasion's victims continue to be held hostage by the mere fact of the invasion. To its victims, alien rape (being certainly no less a crime than domestic rape) carries with it an exponential stigma upon public disclosure. This reluctance to come forward strengthens the invasion's clandestine nature—and in the long run puts more and more citizens at risk of becoming its next victims. And finally, the continuing failure of our governmental officials to confront and remedy the reality of this invasion plays into the hands of its perpetrators—be they human, nonhuman, or some combination thereof.

skates, tearing through a
mall, trail-
The
says Henry, has clearly been tampered with. The
name stirs something in Logan's memory. "Lega-
the
is Legacy
I'm not sure. But that girl
to do with it." Henry recalls that
who sent him the
email message that alerted them to the where-
abouts of
the first place to find his daughter
. Not elsewhere to find them, and
the email was sent via anonymous remailer.
Think, they tell Logan. Try to remember. But
to
his past.

He tries to persuade them to go
after the girl. Now it's their turn for reluctance.
Wanting to
the past, in itself a
milestone for the hitherto fractious mutant
community, break their word, or have another
"successful" exploit backfire. Logan berates
them for helping to perpetuate the very condi-
tions they claim to want to combat, for being
"in the closet." He reminds them how it was
when their own powers emerged—how fright-
ened and alone they felt. At last Xavier agrees.

Professor Xavier, channeling remotely
through Jean (encased in her psi-cordon) and
the
enhancement de-
vice, Cerebro, guides the X-men to Jubilation.
They interrupt a nearly successful recapture at-
tempt by
as
these mutants go to work. Logan, weakened by
the virus, his reactions dulled, is severely injured
in the
. In the end, thanks to
him, the rescue succeeds. Jubilation, viewing the
what has been
done to her and who is responsible, agrees to go
back with them to the Xavier Mansion.

Logan is horrified by uncovering memories of
his
. Who
are
ers, before his "metaforming" and after. He has
a
Gentlemen. He was developed to be a mutant-
hunting superagent, code-named Wolverine,
by
. He had been on the verge of accepting
Logan, are repelled. Jubilation learns from Lo-
gan that
and helped with his programming. He
ly remember hearing her voice, say-
.

Logan, still reeling from revelations about himself and wanting to atone for all he has done, steals the Blackbird and heads for the White Farm. Discovers that Jubilation has tagged along. Unlike him, she wants to learn the truth about herself and is glad that he is there.

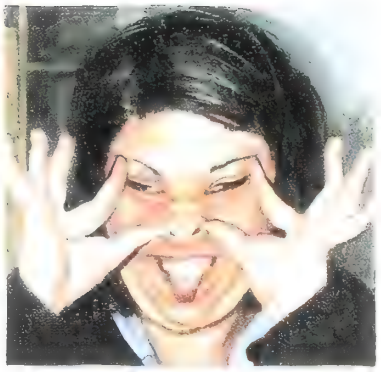
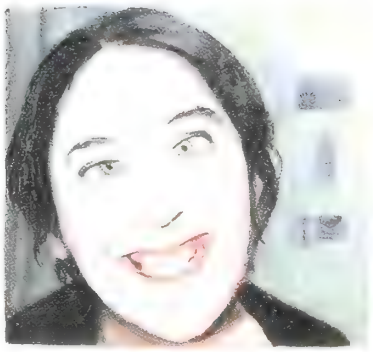
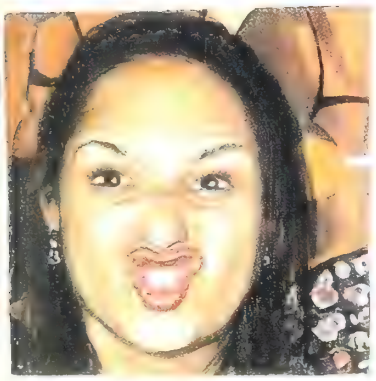
They arrive at the Institute for Modern Animal Husbandry Research in the Canadian Rockies, better known as the White Farm. Operating as a team, they sneak in, but soon afterward Jubilation is captured. Wolverine, attempting to rescue Jubilation, is also captured and returned to his former state of artificial life, linked by tubes and cables to elaborate machinery. In order to resume his programming, his "preconscious blocks" are completely removed and a few memories return—three specific images of tenderness and love. Maybe he's not a killer after all.

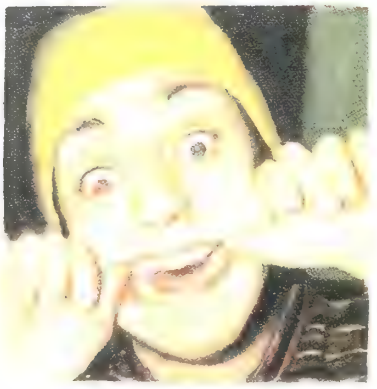
The X-men go after Jubilation and Logan, and in a pitched battle penetrate the heavily guarded compound. They liberate Logan. Searching for information about Jubilation's whereabouts and her role in the Legacy mystery, they come upon incontrovertible evidence that Logan's tender memories that have started to flood back are false, mere implants and virtual constructions. Nothing can be said for sure about him. He has no idea who he really is.

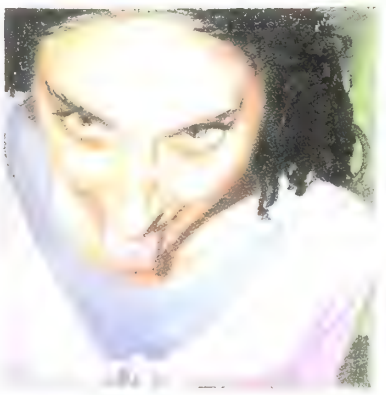
At this the animal in Logan, so long repressed, that aspect of himself he so feared and resisted, bursts to the fore. He goes into a magnificent, terrible, pure berserker rage, mowing down armored Committeemen, leading the X-men to free Jubilation, who is being held in another part of the complex. The X-men are stunned by the change in Logan. Jubilation is rescued, and at the sight of her, free, in his arms, the awful rage in Logan subsides (though without disappearing). The two severed parts of his nature are reintegrating themselves.

Hank accesses Harry Lee's secret files and discovers that the antigen formula is coded right into Jubilation's DNA. It also emerges that it was Jubilation's mother who implanted the deep memory of Jubilation in Logan's mind, just before she was killed, and that she sabotaged his programming, eventually enabling him to escape. It was Montclair's genius to take advantage of this potential disaster, infecting Wolverine (from the air) with the Legacy virus and then sending the false email message to Beast, alerting him and his fellows to Wolverine's presence.

They come upon the nursery, where a small number of kidnapped mutant and premutant children were being raised and trained to become Sports of Nature, antimutant mutant agents, of whom Wolverine was to be the first. After a battle with the armored nannies, they are able to save the children, among them an
with
small, beautiful horns.

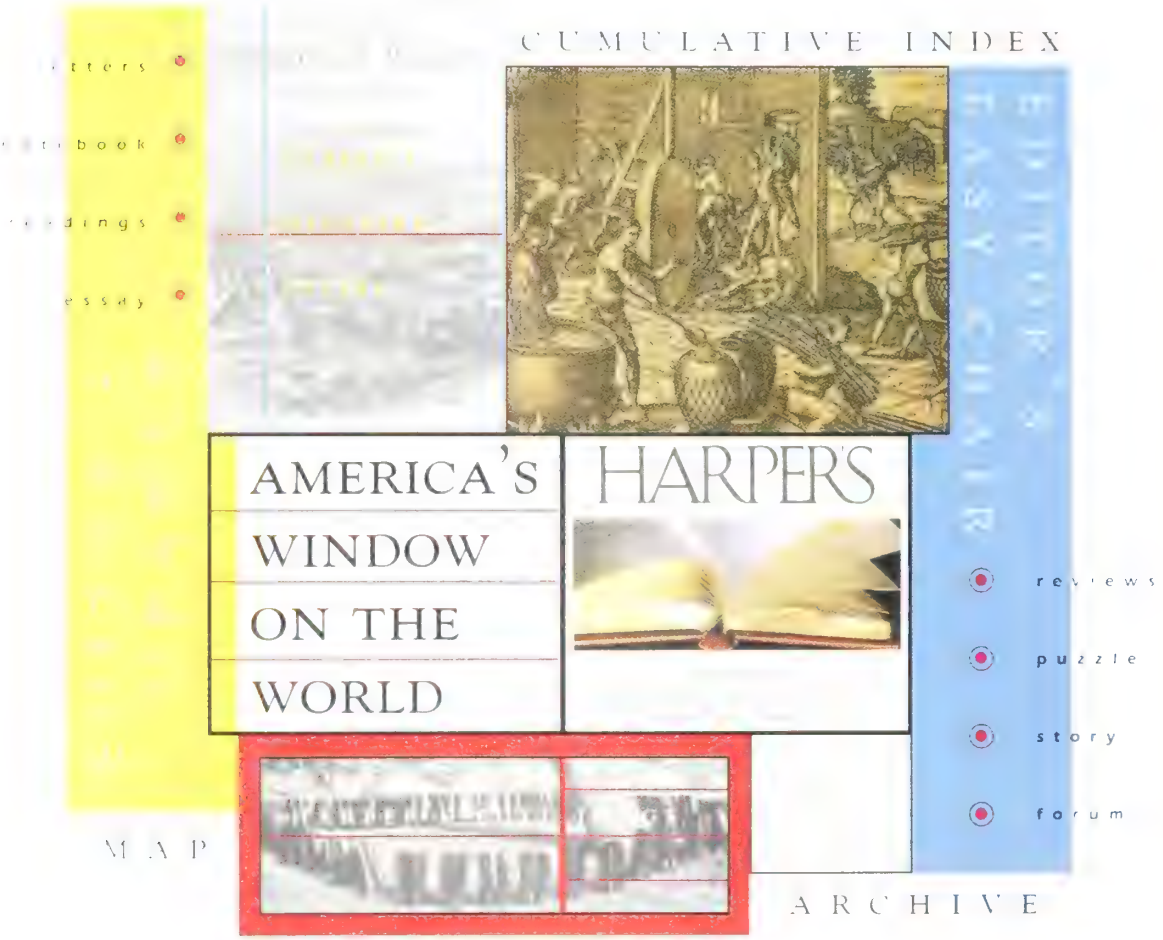







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THE SMALL BOYS' UNIT

Searching for Charles Taylor in a Liberian civil war

BY DENIS JOHNSON



In the winter of 1992 I was invited by a major national magazine to travel to Liberia and write an article about what I found there.

I lived with my family in Iowa City at the time. I taught writing courses at the university. My two children walked a couple of blocks every day to what we'd been assured was one of the nation's best public schools, and my wife worked as a volunteer there several days a week. The people around us in this small city seemed prosperous and happy. And yet I agreed to go.

I intended to write a profile of Charles Taylor, Commander in Chief of the National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly Government (NPRAG) and self-described President of Liberia. After two years of civil war, President Taylor's forces claimed to control the Liberian countryside, all but the capital city of Monrovia. A force of peacekeepers, mostly Nigerian military, had kept him from getting this last bit of territory, where half the country's population lived. Recently a tense peace had given way to battles between, mainly, the Nigerian peacekeepers and the NPRAG, but other factions harassed Taylor on the west and the south, and this amounted to the Liberian civil war's having started up again.

Commercial flights to Taylor's territory had been suspended since the start of the violence. Visitors had to go overland from the Ivory Coast.

At four o'clock on a December morning I got off an Air Afrique jet in Abidjan, the capital of the Ivory Coast, having arranged to be met by representatives of the National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly Government. I had spoken with the NPRAG's foreign minister in Washington, a gentleman named Momolu Sirleaf, and he had assured me that everything was arranged. I had forty U.S. $100 bills stuck in the seams of my pants and the number of somebody to call if the arrangements went wrong.

With the other arrivals I moved under gray fluorescent light and down the bald concrete halls

Denis Johnson is the author most recently of [illegible] *Seek, a collection of* [illegible]

awhile smelling the tropical rot and general

meet me. Then I hired a car to the Intercontinental

The room was small and very clean and wetly air-conditioned. The fake-marble floor had been

I called the number I'd been given, the only local number I had, the number of a Liberian national named Robertson, who'd been

Mr. Robertson, the foreign minister, liked the United States and America. They'd both assured me, I told him, that everything had been arranged. That I'd be met at the airport and then

and from there to Charles Taylor's headquarters

miles inside Liberia.

He sounded unconcerned with my problems. "Oh," he recalled that, yes, he'd heard somebody was supposed to interview the President. He promised to check with his people and meet me in the lobby in twenty minutes.

When he hadn't come after four hours, and he didn't answer his telephone anymore, I guessed

I really only had one person to rely on: the man

who had promised to arrange

My question had to do with Charles Taylor: Was he expecting me, had it really all been arranged?

with the vague manner who'd

d, with the prominent Washington lawyer

Incomprehensible incantations covered the places, even the letterheads, pulsed with mysterious insanity.

rison turned up. He

most fairly a friendly middle-aged Liberian in loose sports apparel and sandals.

"Everything is arranged," he told me happily.

I would travel to the border by commercial bus, accompanied by Mr. Robertson's son Jo I'd be escorted across the border into Liberia, met by a presidential staff car, and taken to Gbarnga and to Charles Taylor.

But first, tomorrow, I'd have to meet with a press officer, a young woman named Marcy, who would give me the background. I wasn't interested in meeting her, but I knew it would be impossible to skip any steps or find a shorter way.

The next morning I had breakfast in the hotel's dining room with Marcy, a woman in a pantsuit, late twenties, more articulate and clearly smarter and more seriously educated than the folks I knew back home. She told me that now the biggest problem for Greater Liberia—Taylor's sector of the country was called—was the Nigerians and their heavy-handed efforts to impose a peace. Because they couldn't seem to extricate themselves without losing face, Liberia had become known as Nigeria's Vietnam. The peacekeeping efforts didn't exclude random bombing raids on the Liberian countryside. I already knew all of this. My question had rather to do with Charles Taylor: Was he expecting me, had it really all been arranged? Everything had seemed so simple: hop over to Abidjan, to the border, to the headquarters. Now I couldn't even get out of this hotel.

Marcy spoke of Charles Taylor with obvious respect. She and all the Liberians I met on the trip referred to their president as "Charles Taylor" or "the President" and never "President Taylor." I make nothing of it but only observe the fact. She listed his accomplishments: consolidation of the countryside, elections and a democratic government, general peace and order interrupted only by outside factions.

I didn't know much about him really, and neither did anybody else, it seemed. Early in the war Taylor's faction had captured Monrovia's AM station. He delivered a report at six o'clock each morning, saying things like "We now have [illegible] thousand prisoners of the peacekeeping force and already I have personally killed seven hundred and fifty-three of them and they die easily, it takes only one bullet to finish two of these cowards and murderers who think they can stomp all over Liberia." He gave these speeches in a loud, hortatory, gruff voice. Maybe this was just a style of oratory, but it got him a doubtful reputation.

Marcy (the press officer) admitted it: "We definitely lost the propaganda war." But she insisted the Reconstruction Assembly Government was actually that—a true government—elected, consisting of representatives democratically chosen in a recent election. By the will of



Mr. Robertson's son John Robertson was a sincere young man in a light, striped long-sleeved jersey, although, to me, the weather seemed very hot. His father had told me we'd be leaving the hotel at eight A.M. to make the first bus to Danané, the air-conditioned luxury bus. The two men arrived at my hotel about one in the afternoon and took me in a cab to a terminal in a muddy market downtown where long-distance buses stopped. The air-conditioned bus had left at eight, unaccountably right on time, so on the open-air transport we bought three seats for the two of us.

The driver refused to estimate our arrival time in Danané. He said, "It's bad luck."

We headed north and west on the four-lane highway, the driver gunning his motor and, like everyone else, just honking—celebrating the miracle of automotive transport. Côte d'Ivoire has many good roads, and this is the best of them, passing as it does alongside Yamoussoukro, the tribal village of the aged President Houphouët-Boigny and now the site of his vast palace and basilica of the monument to his spirituality (he built it, which was built for a quarter of a billion dollars, to some people's great disgust. The pope visited it reluctantly, viewing it as a symbol of top-heaviness and African big-man excess.

The people in the towns and along the country roads howled and shouted greetings, and the children leaped in the air as our bus flew past. When they actually wanted the bus to stop, they stretched out an arm and silently waved it up and down as if petting an invisible pony, looking completely bored.

After dark we came to Danané, the border town, which really did feel perched on the edge of an immensely different zone. Herdsmen and

"Everything is arranged," John Robertson told me.

"Thank God."

"I forgot to mention that we appear to have a small problem," he said.

"Okay . . ."

"Evidently it seems Winston Holder already left this morning to the border and

"A journalist? Who?"

"I don't know who. They thought it must be

"But *I'm* me," I said, though from the first hour

will be arranged promptly, and we'll

your itinerary."

"I thought everything was arranged," I said.

banished. Everything is arranged means that all
folding before our eyes. So eat, drink, sleep. Every-



underwear. He didn't know who we were, or who

"We'll pick it up, go to Gbarnga, and meet with
Preside
to the border."

Augustus's face was small and round and bet
up with big, droopy eyes that made him l
burdened with grief and wisdom. "I forgot
mention," he said, "but it's unfortunate that at thi
time we cannot particularly cross the border,
cause first we have to see the *commissaire de
lice*. We need to get permission to cross."

We hired a car to the police station, an im
posing edifice, comparatively, housing five offic
also and a cell behind a heavy wooden do
People slept on the red clay floors of the lobby a
the hallway using th
shoes or sandals as pillo

The desk officer sat
hind a high concre
counter telling anybo
who entered to sit do
and wait. Augustus an
waited an hour or so
stone bench in the lob
then we waited a cou
more hours on a woo
bench in a hallway. I
peatedly I asked him
show me somebody aro
here I could bribe. E
time, he shook his he
"Not yet. The moment
be right."

That afternoon we
before a khaki-uniform
man in an office decora
with health posters and
ad for tires, across a d
covered with little rubb
banded bundles of identity cards. This offic
explained in French that we needed to go
Abidjan and apply for and wait for and even
ally be issued an official Press Identity Card. Th
he'd be happy to let me cross the western bor

Today was Friday. So I'd have to wait ur
Monday to start the application process — to d
himself a bureaucratic web and let them dev
the details of my sanity.

Augustus and I put our heads together. "Let
just bribe this guy," I whispered. "If he calls a
perior or ropes in anybody else at all, it'll be
late to pay him off."

When the man got off the phone, he said h
just talked to his superior, the mayor, and t
mayor had said we must go to Abidjan. I n
grasped that this man was the *commissaire de
lice*. I slipped a $20 bill inside my passport. I han
ed the document to him and asked him in Fr
[illegible] on at my visa. He opened it, stud
the twenty dollars, smacked it shut, and hand
it back across the desk.

"All morning I've been saying, 'Who do I bri
Who do I bribe?' Now we're screwed," I told A
gustus. "Because this was the guy, and we miss

r chance. The staff car won't wait up there at
e border another three days, will it?"
"Ah! these people," he said.
"Can we call up to the Liberian side and tell
em what's going on? Get the car to wait?"
"That's an excellent idea, Denis," he told me.
Unfortunately, the telephones on the Liberian
le are temporarily out of order."
We went across the hall to get some sort of
rmission to leave the town for Abidjan or—I
n't know what. They wanted to decorate my
ssport with another clearance. I handed my
cuments to a young boy who asked my desti-
tion. "Liberia," I said. He stamped a page and
were out of that place, prepared to go back to
e capital and start all over again.
"Look at what the boy stamped here." I showed
ugustus my passport. "It says 'Liberia.'"
Augustus looked amused. "You fooled him by
stake."
"I can cross the border with this?"
"If we hurry," he said. "At any second these peo-
e might realize the mistake."
"If they do—can they radio ahead of us?"
"They have a telephone to the border station
the Ivory side. They might give a call to stop
"
He found a car for hire and we leaped inside. The
bie switched on his ignition using a bent nail.
At the edge of town we reached a police out
st and a barricade, showed my documents, and
re waved along onto a red dirt road that head
over grassy hills to the border. The scene was
storal but desolate. Dusty yellow flowers on tall
lks. Seagulls. Goats. Ten miles along we reached
ollection of shacks and large sheds, the village
Gbé-Nda. We dismissed the car and walked to
rude roadblock—a long branch jammed onto
o posts beside a red sign saying ARRETEZ.
"Is this Liberia?" I asked.
"It's still Ivoire," Augustus said, "the last bor-
station"—a shed with a man in it holding a
n in his lap. The telephone, housed in a box on
ole about ten yards away, looked unfortunately
e a good one, but evidently it hadn't rung yet.
e guard searched my knapsack and stole my
ps. He asked for money, and Augustus told
n, "I coming back. I see you soon. I coming
k." He accepted the erroneous stamp in my
sport. The telephone kept quiet.
We crossed a plank bridge over a narrow gorge
l entered Liberia. A hundred yards along we
ne around a curve in the track to find Loguatuo,
illage wandering over a green plain under gi-
ntic acacia trees. We saw a few women and
s, but the population seemed mostly to be
efoot teenage men wearing the rags and tags
camouflage outfits and carrying rifles.
Augustus knew his way around. We approached
rge wooden kiosk, passing the stares of scores
of these young men, many of whom seemed red
eyed and slack-jawed and decidedly messed up on
something. They knew Augustus and called to
you?" they said. "I coming back," he told them all,
"I tell you later. Now I'm with important man for the
President." One made a gesture quite new to
me—discreetly pulling down his lower eyelid
with his forefinger. "Man, I'll see you when I get
back!" Augustus shouted at him, while another
one bird-dogged us with his gun barrel nodding
down discomfitingly toward our spines until
Shaaks asked him if he was going to shoot us and
he replied he didn't know.

Augustus went and talked for a long time with
the guards. When he came back, he said, "Well,
unfortunately, according to some people here,
the staff car came yesterday and picked up a jour-
nalist and took him to Gbarnga."

"Great! The mystery journalist!"

"I couldn't say. I think we're all right. We could
be dealing with a miscommunication," he said.

Augustus left me with a Coca-Cola while he
went off to find our staff car and change some

> We passed the stares of scores of young men, many of whom seemed red eyed, slack jawed, and decidedly messed up on something

money for me. He came back with an insane mul-
titude of worn-out five-dollar bills. "What's this?"

"Liberian JJ's. The man on the money is Joseph
J. Roberts." A Liberian founding father who
looked like George Washington in a powder wig,
only he was black.

"What are they worth?"

"We can use them to pay off the boy at the next
route," he said.

"What about the car?"

"They're already returning to pick us up."

"Where did you get this information?"

"I'm sure they realized the mistake."

"I don't think anybody around here realizes
anything at all. Not one goddamn thing."

"Everything is arranged. We'll radio tomor-
row."

"Can't we do it now?"

"There's a very minor problem that prevents
the radio from functioning."

"WOW," was all I could think of to say.

"They're going to work on it."

My parents raised me to love all the earth's
peoples. Three days in this zone and I could on-
ly just manage to hold myself back from scream-
ing, Niggers! niggers! niggers! until one of these
young men emptied a whole clip into me.

A Toyota van pulled up to the kiosk now, and

earth, shouting mysterious things.

"Gettemi!" he shouted, "Gettemi, Gettemi!" passionately. I'd say he was in his sixties, a Euro- [illegible] physical soul he had almost disappeared and been left with not much more than the tendons and skin and astonishment of a baby bird. What astonished him beyond his capacity to contain himself, at the moment, was the guards' request for some money. "MONEY! You think I *Mister* Pay! You sonabitch I never give you money you kill me come on I DON'T care, [illegible] kill me seven thousand time!"

The young men laughed. They'd get no JJs, no entertainment. When the man noticed me he pierced me with a look of complete understanding and sympathy and fellow feeling.

I told him who I was and asked him if he could [illegible] anywhere. He said he was Antonio Rainieri from Gbarnga, going back home, and of course I was welcome to a ride. I asked about his origins. He'd come from Italy, where exactly

Augustus delivered a whole speech with his face—I was a rude child who would lead us both nowhere

in Italy he seemed to have forgotten or to consider irrelevant.

He screamed, "Ay! ay! ay! Rainieri he a foun- [illegible] MONEY!" [illegible] inked at the zipper of his khaki pants and chased the boys around, pretending to urinate.

"It seems this man is crazy," Augustus warned [illegible]

"Allow me to suggest that we wait until—"

—until we get your itinerary sorted out. To- [illegible] Augustus had to join me [illegible] Presidential stay-by my side.

We set off into the West African dusk. For [illegible] tarmac. Mr. Rainieri cursed each pothole like a [illegible]

The checkpoints hindered us more than the condition of the road. They followed one another relentlessly. At each one Rainieri went into a psychotic rage: "Gettemi, Gettemi!" (which eventually I deciphered as goddammit). Some of the guards thought it funny, others complained—"You speaking forceful to me." Mr. Rainieri had limitless time to deal with these delays, to lambaste the guards, and Augustus wanted everybody to shake my hand in lieu of money.

Driving one-handed and waving his cigarette, Rainieri told me, "I love Ahfreeka, I love everybaddy, we all one family, we all one family!"

"Where did you learn your English?"

"Here! Here!" he said in a way that left some doubt as to whether he knew of anyplace else.

Whenever I glanced at Augustus beside me he delivered a whole speech with his face—I was a rude child who would lead us both nowhere and I'd be sorry (but as my caretaker he would stick with me to the end and fish me out when I sank myself), and he looked forward to my tormented apology.

We advanced at a lurching crawl. Each time the van banged into a hole Mr. Rainieri went insane with disappointment, which, it turned out, wasn't so strange, since his business was construction and he'd paved much of the road himself. In his unique Italian Creole he talked of his experience here in Liberia, almost entirely unintelligibly, but it amounted to a diatribe against nobody in particular—he blamed nobody for the surrounding chaos—and a lament that with the coming of war, business had stopped, death had ruled the land, and although now the worst was past, Charles Taylor's recovery seemed stalled. "Charles Taylor is good man. I meet him! I like Charles Taylor! He took my D4 Caterpillar. He can have it, he good man. I love everybaddy!"

The road got better as we neared Gbarnga. On the outskirts we dropped Augustus at a friend's home. He would find me tomorrow after contacting the press office.

"A good, good, good man!" Mr. Rainieri said of Augustus.

I spent the night with the Rainieris, a lanky multiracial family who slept on the floor of a ranch-style house without power or running water. The next morning Mr. Rainieri drove me into Gbarnga.

The highway was in good shape, but the shabby main street of this very small town had crumbled back to dirt. Mr. Rainieri stopped and got out of the car. "I show you my restaurant!" he said. "I have a restaurant!" He opened the doors of the Ciao Restaurant and showed it proudly—no mention of the fact that it was closed and probably had never been opened. A rough wooden table and a couple of chairs. I was spared having to comment by some children who came to the door and spoke to Mr. Rainieri.

"Somebody looking you!" he said. "Come!"

Outside, the people on the street stood still, observing a late-model burgundy Mercedes as

ed going maybe sixty to the end of the
ck and whirled around and raced back to halt
vering before us in a choking fog of dust.
Two big black men leaped from the front doors
I came out and shook both my hands simul-
aeously, one on the left and one on the right.
ess slacks, sport shirts, sunglasses, and purple
ets. They introduced themselves as press
.cers.
"We're here to take you to the
sident."
"The President!" Mr. Rainieri
outed, and clapped me on the
k. "Go to the President! Good-
!"
I got into the back seat of their
ercedes, and we headed onto the
ghway at a speed exceeding 100
h and then screeched to a crawl
r checkpoint. But we didn't stop
e Mercedes nudged against the
e stretched taut across the pave
nt. A guard spoke shyly: "Please
use me, sir—"
They sang of their contempt, their
ary outrage, in three descending
tes—"*Drop* the gate. *Drop* the
e."
The guards dropped the rope as if
acked a jolt, and in twenty sec-
ds we were breaking 100 again.
ally! People on the move! Seri-
s people! And powerful too: checkpoints melt-
away as they approached singing, "*Drop* the
e, man. *Drop* the gate."
We spent the morning driving crazily from
ce to place without explanation, possibly be-
se I asked for none. Like my press officers, I felt
was complete, the car was enough, every-
ng was arranged.
After noon we entered a realm of tall rubber
es. Cool suffused light and perfect little golf-
rse gravel roads, the Firestone rubber plan-
ion, 1 million acres of tall slender trees. The
estone people themselves had all left. Now
Revolution owned it. Twenty miles into this
onishing forest devoted to a single life-form we
ne out from under the trees and into a square
le or more of groomed lawns with a few build
s scattered across them like toys. In the largest
lding we were met by a servant-woman in a
ite uniform who handed me a dripping ice-
bottle of Coca-Cola and asked me if I'd like
hicken sandwich. The place appeared to be a
ge lodge encircled by rows of rooms—scores of
sts might be accommodated here. Hot show
, air-conditioned bedrooms. A chicken god-
n sandwich? Why on earth not? In this place
mained for several days before I understood
been taken prisoner.

I didn't lack companions. A handful of NPRAG legislators had gathered here, or liked to hang around here, or were also being held here. In two weeks or three they'd be elected to the presidency, they admitted was hasty but instead was inevitable, and they certainly didn't need to convince me of anything, but they tried.

One of them, Dr. Sebo, who resided principally in London, had preceded me here by just a day or two. There was also a journalist named Joseph Baker, a Gilbertese (that is, I'm beginning and we're not from Micronesia) who pointed out that we weren't getting anywhere. He'd been here seven or eight days, he said, or nine. He'd lost track. He liked it fine.



NPRAG

And I don't think my trivial thought made me keep me here, because it couldn't possibly be done against my will, since I could be [illegible] place. There was even an [illegible] phone I was permitted to use to call my wife in Iowa City. The only problem was that the folks from the NPRAG, while stunningly polite and genuinely friendly, didn't take me anywhere, though they promised to [illegible] buttonhole one of them.

All day I drank freezing Coca-Cola and clean springwater brought to me by black maids in white livery. I chatted often with the legislators as we partook together of the colonial spirit in this country, which, rarest among all those of Africa, [illegible]

Dr. Sebo was a fit-looking man of medium size, physically warm and intellectually vibrant. He laid out the situation in Liberia: elections were done, the land was governed, order had returned, the youngsters with guns had learned some restraint—Dr. Sebo himself had witnessed, right in

ry executions of three checkpoint guards for the
their peacekeeping role in Monrovia into a sporadic
nationwide bombing campaign from the air. Meanwhile the Nigerians ignored the factions troubling the borders to the southwest, from Sierra Leone, and the Nigerians themselves contributed to the
smoldering battle at the front, just this side
Monrovia. Taylor's people held Roberts Field, the airport, where nothing flew in or out. "The country irrevocably in the hands of its people," Dr. Se
said. "Nigeria has floundered into its own little Vietnam." The others agreed.



scattered out
ls taken from dead Nigerians. The men combed through the cards
Max Willie, man-
on's FM radio station, held
th a bullet hole through it. "1969,"
nan atrocities against in-
it these tales had come to
nd unsubstantiated and had
nd. Their enemy was bad, they be-
him.
nemes also. The other
exile in Monrovia, support-
l given the slightest nod
ria they had a completely different
man named Sawyer. All
ernments knew

gether here and there, in London, mostly, but they'd chosen their sides. If they had to, they their former friends.

They spoke to me of the "wind of change," and I could feel it sweeping upward through room in a small tornado of good-fellowship, beery respiration and pomade and cologne sweat. Yes, people had to be killed. Dr. Seb illustrated for me: "If I happen to have a boil thigh, for instance, a boil full of pus, I must squeeze out the poison." He worked his two thumbs together, performing this operation, getting shoulders into it. "You squeeze and squeeze, and you, and you expel the rotten pus—but you're not satisfied you've got the whole of it until you see some blood flowing."

Crowded into this room with these men made right alive by the irrevocability of their choices and the presence of sudden death, I felt and relief. Relief among b people I hadn't done anyth to, deeply black Afric whose history runs to cate me. Of course the sin the U.S. government to this region as all regions: I can repudiate those sin fortlessly. They're merely sins of people with too m power. I'm not one of this, didn't wreck this place.

Suddenly Augustus Sha stood in the room, bowed slumped, as if cut down fr hanging tree but refusin crumple, his face looking from the depths of some great wrong, my wr somebody's floor. He'd taken me all the way and then been dropped like a boy and chea out of this luxury.

"Augustus," I said, ashamed of myself and so hating him for making so much of it, "you with me from now on."

Thereafter Augustus ranged around the pl tation on my behalf, trying to get a sense whether or not I'd ever get going on the ma zine's profile of Charles Taylor, an assignme cared nothing about now. Morning, noon, night Augustus turned up and told me, "Th is nothing to report."

"What am I doing here?" I asked repeated

"Everything is arranged," he said. "I'll repor you again tomorrow."

Tall streetlamps surrounded the lodge, and compound stayed lit up through the night lik sports event. When the town of Kakata twe miles off was rocketed one night by Nigerian

a Jets, or so the system is, I pointed out to
ne of the staff who'd invited me to the
and made "We can't turn the lights on,"
the maids said. "The switch is in the utilities
om, and we don't have the key." I demanded
ey break the door down and get the lights
itched off before the next batch of Alpha Jets
used overhead. The staff needed to stay
men, couldn't imagine authorizing this kind
destruction.

omewhere in the second week of my
my internment, my quarantine . . . I was ap-
proached by Max Willie, who, along with Au-
stus Shaacks, looked after me. Max was short
d stocky, a young man with perfect English. "I
ve something to report," he said.
Let me say I was astonished. "Yes?"
"You're going to eat at the President's
ening. Please be ready at eight o'clock."
"The President?"
"Exactly, my friend—Charles Taylor!"
"Where is he?"
"He's in Firestone now quite possibly. He's def-
tely in the region."
About eight-thirty or nine that night, only a
minutes after Max had pulled away in the
e lodge to take me to the President, as we stood
his Nissan Patrol waiting for Dr. Sebo and the
anaian Joseph Baba, something like a low
nd began off in the distant night and grew
ser and closer and became a terrible loud wail
that erased all other sounds—an air-raid siren,
ought. The noise passed right overhead. Peo-
shouted, "The plane! The plane!" We heard
whump whump of explosives
t, quite nearby.
There was no drill for this other than that peo-
ran around screaming until the explosions
pped. The aircraft's commotion diminished
he distance. The countryside was silent. The
ies of the staff had clumped
her under the building's portcullis.
Max said, "Nigeria plane!"
"Where did it hit?"
Augustus said, "They're launching on the
lage!"
Max and Augustus and I climbed aboard the
ssan Patrol with three young gunmen. We head
toward Harbel Village, a mile away.
n order not to draw attention to ourselves we
ve without headlights, yet without any trou-
because the sky was clear and the region
shed in light from a colossal yellow moon past
ee-quarters full.
wasn't happy about the seating in the Pa-
– I ended up in the rear, in the middle, the last
out should the Nigerians return and go on
nicle. However, when in just a few minutes we
heard the terrible noise of the plane coming over
ing to the trunk of a rubber tree, before I con
beneath its wings as the rockets came. I went
tiny seething darkness under the grass.
The noise abated, the plane vanished, and the
laughter. When we got back to the guesthouse it
ompletely dark.
The two young men at the checkpoint said
time."

here was no drill for the bombing other than to run around screaming until the explosions stopped

Max said, "Michael, don't be an ass, man—this
The guard shook his head. "We have our orders, Sir."
"Sir, please, please."
"Turn it around, we're going to the President
"All right!" the guard said. "No problem, please proceed."
burst. Leading us around with a flashlight, Joseph
them in his gigantic hands and laughed happily
Augustus Shaacks and two gunmen began

Charles Taylor directed his troops, and he would spent one night right up until dawn slinking from place to place around the rubber plantation, stopping and waiting and sending messages back and forth to the elusive President. That is, *I* sent messages to *him*. I sent Charles Taylor brief tearstained notes at each stop, thanking him for his incredible hospitality and lamenting that I must leave his land prematurely, leave his land right now, because of pressing assignments elsewhere which I would complete before returning quite very soon indeed. Inviting words I composed. But I'd never yet seen the President.

We traveled in style to these failed rendezvous. Fine vehicles were everywhere, their owners were nowhere. As we were friends now, I could joke with my escorts. We just felt happy driving around, sticking our faces into the breeze like overheated dogs.

Max and Augustus took me to Buchanan Port, the country's major harbor, which the Nigerians and sculpted and spilling out tons of burning,

Max and Augustus came to me early the next day. "Finally!" Max said. "We're taking you to see the President"

and hissed as if the destruction had brought it to life. Barrels of coffee beans had blown apart and

and Augustus watched me. I licked my pen point,

Max and Augustus came to me early the [illegible] Max said. "Finally! [illegible] the President."

"The President of what?"

Dr. Sebo said, "I'll be going along."

"Where on earth are we going now?" I asked

"Down Main," Sebo said. "It's nineteen miles due east of Kakata. Charles Taylor has been [illegible] operation there against a small incursion."

We headed out through Kakata and onto a bush road and then to a bridge, where we spent most of the afternoon waiting only a few scant yards, I was assured, from the spot where President Taylor had his hands full trying to keep forces of a rival faction from overrunning his territory. We could hear the boom of mortars in the distance like massive firecrackers in massive garbage cans. "He wears a Kevlar helmet and vest," Augustus said. "Yes," Sebo said, "I've seen him. He talks constantly on the radio telephone."

After two or three hours we headed back to Kakata without having seen President Taylor, who I was utterly convinced by now had not even been born.

"Sir," our driver said to Max, "it's time for petrol."

For reasons that never became completely clear to me, I spent some hours that afternoon with Max sitting at a bent card table next to a bullet-splashed police kiosk out front of the Virgin Island co-, observing the main highway through Kakata. We drank Fanta cola and many beers, and Max told me he'd forgotten to mention that Gbarnga, the capital of NPRAG territory, happened to be the sister city of Baltimore. We sat and watched the general populace going up and down the street, up and down the street. Every last citizen was moving, you'd have thought.

Among the pedestrians were a lot of bush people. As I took note of this and of the number of gunmen suddenly all over the place, a dirt-streaked guerrilla with a portable launcher on his shoulder and a rocket grenade dangling from his hand caught sight of me and came over to us, saying his name was Rufus.

Rufus's black hair was powdered with red dust. His eyes looked unhealthy, jaundiced, and addled, too: they were crimson from the effect of whatever was also making his stare so unnerving.

Rufus said, "You know me."

"No, I don't think I do."

"Look again."

"I don't remember."

"Remember better."

"I can't," I said.

"Lofa."

"I wasn't there."

"Yes."

I asked Max and Gus if Rufus was high, and they laughed loud and long, as if it were so obviously true or so obviously false as to make the question hilarious.

The voices on the street were a hubbub—loud and more rapid than just a few minutes before. The gunmen all around seemed completely unsupervised, roaring up and down the highway in pickups with the tops sawed off, the ammunition pounded and dead comrades dangling over the sides, the boys laughing and screaming.

A feeling swept into the town like a palpable wind, a spirit of poisonous fear; it moved, I felt it, was in one place and not another, it was coming, then it was here. It shivered in the eyes of everyone around us. People thronged the road now, terrified, half-naked Liberian people carrying nothing with them, exhausted, finished, but still moving, energized by this thing that possessed them. Sebo appeared and insisted we get in the jeep. "I don't like this," he said. He also was incited, I saw it in his eyes and the way he worked his lips. My own heart pounded and I tasted something awful in my mouth, both icy and hot.

An open carrier of gunmen pulled up beside our jeep. There wasn't any reason for them to stop here, and they were blocking our way, but they seemed unaware of us, celebrating madly, howling and laughing.

"I don't like this." Sebo glanced around us. "These boys are full."

I didn't know what he meant. I didn't want them to be full. None of them acknowledged us except for one wounded man who [illegible] with a bloody sweater wrapped around his head. He looked mischievous and quietly delighted and proud of his head.

We plowed slowly through the crowds in the streets, heading for the road to Firestone. Before we'd moved three blocks we heard Alpha Jets and rocket blasts and pulled beneath a widely spreading tree to wait for safety. The raid passed in minutes.

For the next couple of hours we toured the destruction, all of it, several places hit by thirty-millimeter warheads. One had descended through the roof of a derelict gas station just as a man named Joseph Kove and his family had gathered under it for prayers. It blew out the walls and knocked down a shed fifty meters away, but Joseph's whole family, twenty-one people in all, had been spared, probably because, as Joseph pointed out, they'd been praying.

The raid had been extensive. People had been killed or injured all over town and [illegible] to the hospital, which I never actually visited. "It's something like a garage for expiring persons," Sebo said confidentially.

We waded through the rubble of a corrugated house that had been hit, three by [illegible] two chopped through the grass and came up out of the floor; two tore through the roof, chasing people through the rooms, blasting holes and tearing polka dots in the walls with shrapnel and scattering hundreds of white pamphlets entitled "How to Know JESUS CHRIST" all over the



ground. Bloody belongings scattered everywhere, and trails of blood in the grass as if slaughtered pigs had been dragged across the yard. A couple of dozen people from the neighborhood tagged me [illegible] I pretended to make some kind of [illegible] and wrote at my request. And I'm the idiot walking around with a pen and a pad and there's nothing, nothing I can do for this. They think these tears are sweat." I picked [illegible] the leaflets, which I have in my possession to this day. "My dear friend! Are you born again? Does God's Holy Spirit live within you?" The people crowded around me, explaining that these attacks were unprovoked, these victims were harmless families. "Look at how they have been killed! Look at where they died!"

Very early the next morning I ran into Joseph Baba downstairs under the awning at the Firestone guesthouse. He stood there flanked by two [illegible] London-bought suitcases. Joseph Baba was quite a very large man with deep-black skin, a basso voice, spectacles with thick black rims. He looked like a foreign-exchange graduate student. The whole time I'd been here he'd had the good sense not to do anything at all except to soak up the air-conditioning and eat the food. "Time to head home," he told me.

"What? How?"

meet this fellow Gordon-Somers from the U.N. [illegible] be heading farther on. To the border."

[illegible] and was just [illegible] with Joseph and two gunmen when Augustus Shaacks came along with Max Willie, and they inserted themselves into my escape—they didn't prevent it, just de-



layed things an hour or so while we discussed the unintelligible pros and cons of everything on earth, and then they came along, too. Meanwhile [illegible] heading toward the Ivoirian border, but perhaps, now [illegible]

We stopped at a small town halfway between Kakata and the border and ate some rice at a café. Neither Max nor Augustus joined us. In fact they took the jeep and disappeared. Dr. Se- [illegible] didn't even mention the name of [illegible] familiar with the area?"

[illegible] anywhere else."

[illegible] the jeep. They had a rapid, nervous air about them, very uncharacteristic. "Come on now," [illegible] President."

I was dumbfounded—surprised that they could manage to surprise [illegible]

As we drove through town nobody said a word; the feeling in the car was that something of g [illegible] moment was now transpiring. We proceed [illegible] about ten miles farther down the highway a [illegible] turned off onto a track through grassland and [illegible] to, apparently, a plantation, a region of low [illegible] rama plants, an ocean of them stretching off [illegible] ward every horizon.

We'd come three miles or so off the highw [illegible] when we found a place where the plants thin [illegible] out and dozens of men and boys, most of them [illegible] tiny children, camped amo [illegible] scattered vehicles, the smoke [illegible] their cook fires hanging co [illegible] pletely still in the dim unifo [illegible] light.

"Yes," Dr. Sebo said. His to [illegible] was reverent. "This is the Sm [illegible] Boys' Unit."

"We are quite close now to [illegible] President," Augustus said.

"How do you know?"

"Because now we are with [illegible] Small Boys' Unit."

Sebo said, "Here he com [illegible] This is the commander, I thi [illegible]

A grown man, a man ab [illegible] forty, came forward now, led [illegible] from the recesses of the jun [illegible] by one of the small boys, wh [illegible] evidently fetched him to d [illegible] with us. Dr. Sebo shook the m [illegible] hand and introduced him to [illegible] "This is the captain of the Sm [illegible] Boys' Unit."

"Well, Captain! They're certainly sma [illegible] Joseph Baba agreed.

"Are they in training?" I asked.

"This is the personal bodyguard of the Pre [illegible] dent," Dr. Sebo said. "If we've reached the [illegible] Charles Taylor can only be a few yards away."

That got us all peering diligently into the s [illegible] rounding murk. But no President appeared fr [illegible] out of it.

I said, "His personal bodyguard? I don't get [illegible]

"Don't you? These small boys are the soldi [illegible] Charles Taylor can trust implicitly, you see, [illegible] cause they love him as their father. These are [illegible] orphans who sought him out as their only pare [illegible] Many of these small boys witnessed the deaths [illegible] their entire families. Most of them walked h [illegible] all alone, some of them as far as a hundred mil [illegible] to be with the President. They walked here ba [illegible] feet. But you see them now—now they ha [illegible] shoes."

He waited for some comment. But I could [illegible] contribute to this conversation because I had a [illegible] solutely no idea what to say.

The captain asked, "Would you like to int [illegible] view a prisoner of war?"

"A prisoner of war?"

"Yes, we have a prisoner here with us, a Nigerian pilot."

"Was he shot down?"

"He infiltrated our border disguised as a refugee just from Ivory Coast, the area where these people come from."

I turned on my microcassette recorder. They led me around behind a large pained truck where several small boys surrounded a man on his knees with his face in the dirt and hurled the small boys were stomping repeatedly on the man's head with the heel of his tennis-shoed foot.

"Come here!" The captain seemed to be speaking to the captive, though the man couldn't have moved on his own and was being dragged toward me over the ground by a gang of small boys. He wore only khaki pants torn off around his thighs. Both his shoulders were dislocated and his elbows pinned together behind him, wrapped with black rubber strap that then looped around his neck to keep his head pulled far back. The position had turned him completely permissible to whatever the suffering just issued out of him.

He said, "Save me, sah. Please, sah. I beg you."

I said, "When was he captured?" God help me. That is what I said.

His face and head were a mass of bloody knots and oozing lacerations, and some of his teeth had been knocked out and both lips split through. His legs were bound with a hemp rope. His left leg was swollen monstrously and appeared broken at the knee. All of him was swollen; his skin was shiny and yellowish, rupturing in places like a rind.

They raised him up by the strap around his neck to look at me. He said, "Save me, sah. Save me, sah."

The captain said to him: "Where were you arrested?"

"I was arrested at Maryland border."

"Maryland border?"

"Yes."

The captain said, "Where you are from? Nigeria?"

"Yes." He seemed weary with reviewing the particulars. He listed them curtly, returning to: I'm a student, I'm not a pilot, I'm Nigerian, yes, I came from there . . . "I'm a student in Britain, London—I work for August Martin . . . got sacked. Because of events I could not continue my studies. I came again, I came back. I was . . . I came back to the country. So since then I been looking to . . . back to my girlfriend, who is . . . I don't know what to tell him . . . she went over the same time with me . . . overseas—she got into United States . . . I don't know. Britain.

"So when she heard of my problem, she said, she said—she sent me a ticket and a full allotment of one hundred fifty dollars to get my visa. But the British Embassy couldn't give me a visa. They said I have to get a letter from me at a hotel . . . to get your ticket, to try and get me a letter, but that was not possible, so she said I should come over to Monrovia where she was easy and they will . . . to because she know about the . . . I didn't have the money to go by . . . flight to Monrovia, I started to go by flight to Abidjan and then come by road to the end of the border into . . . Monrovia . . . I was only following the directions I was given and I was . . . so . . . when I got into the border they arrested me. I have . . ."

The captain said, "You are a liar!"

"— this is true. That is true before God."

Naturally I've had occasion, in the intervening years, to remember this man. Sometimes he fills my memory. The way I remember him he bellows like a steer in the slaughterhouse, his agony is unbearable. And then, listening to the tape, I find it isn't true. On the tape his voice is measured and steady. His mind is focused, every bit of him is trained on getting himself across.

"Please, sir, please, sir, I will do anything. I have told them anything for them to find the truth to save me . . . since I don't want to keep on living like this. I will do anything, please."

"How . . . how long have you been . . . ?"

"I was arrested on Sunday. Since then I have been . . . (inaudible) . . . they have taken me to many places. I have made statements, I have signed them, and then last night I was taken to the . . . I will do, please. I've been . . . (inaudible) . . . I've been undergoing different kind of tortures, and every time . . ."

They led me around behind a truck where several small boys surrounded a man on his knees with his face in the dirt

"And you're . . . civilian?"

"Yes . . . I'm a . . . civilian. I have no . . . I have never taken any . . . with my . . . I can't . . . to . . . my . . . I plead . . . to save me!"

The captain, aware of the tape recorder, continued his examination. He had several prisoner like a man-in-the-street radio interview. "Okay . . . Are you a civilian?"

"Yes, I am a civilian. I have never participated . . . I am a student in . . . I'm going to . . . there's a war there." And your girlfriend, she's . . . you were traveling with your girlfriend?"

"I . . . I mean . . . I'm not . . . when this . . . were you traveling with your girlfriend?"

the Monrovia capital is peaceful—there's no more [illegible] to get [illegible] I have to follow so I can go by hand." Did he mean "on foot"?

"Why you cannot travel by ship, because that [illegible]

"I've never—I didn't know that, I've never traveled by ship, I didn't know [illegible]

The captain grabbed his ear. "How can you tell me that you didn't know from Abidjan to Monrovia about a ship?"

"About a ship? You see, since I came back from [illegible] I've been following the war or—or knowing what actually [illegible] And that's why I can say I was stupid. I didn't check very well."

I held out toward his lips the microcassette tape recorder. "Can you state your name for the [illegible]?" There's no sense evading an admission that I was completely out of my depth here.

"My name is Benjamin Ugwu."

"Spell it?"

"U, G—G is for God—W, U."

A small boy said, "The man lying!"

"No—I'm not lying."

Dr. Sebo stepped in. He didn't like this man. And I could see he was angry with me too, for interfering. "Didn't you tell your interrogators this morning that you are a pilot?"

I took my ID card off and hung it around Ugwu's neck, loudly and clearly saying my name and the name of the United States

[illegible] that whatever I'm saying they don't believe me, that unless if I say I'm a pilot, that I came here to bombard, then that's when they set me free. I was doing everything to see that I don't die, I'll [illegible]

At this point I made a bizarre gesture. Around my neck on a chain I wore my photo ID card. I [illegible] ly and clearly saying his name and saying my [illegible] name of the United States of America: that the magic from these names would stand around him against his misfortunes.

[illegible] don't think that is a good idea at all. No, no, [illegible]

[illegible] seemed to be considered atrocious behavior, [illegible] man's captors will answer to the United States.

Ugwu began to down weeping. "Please, sah, al[illegible] they beat me, oh, how they beat me. Tell [illegible] please kill me. Please. Shoot me, or let me [illegible] I don't care if they shoot me. I don't care if [illegible] let me go."

Dr. Sebo spoke quietly with the captain [illegible] Creole. He came back to me and said, "Plea[illegible] then. All right. This man is going to be all rig[illegible] I have the captain's word on that. Just remo[illegible] your credentials, and everything will be take[illegible] care of."

By now I was worried about what I'd done [illegible] afraid of my own fate in this place. And I [illegible] haved like a man afraid, stooping to remove [illegible] card from around Ugwu's neck while he wep[illegible]

The captain spoke, and a small boy stepped forward with a big knife. Straddling Ugwu's [illegible] he put his hand around the captive's forehead and forced the head even farther backward. I thought he was going to cut his throat. He sl[illegible] the black strappado pinning Ugwu's elbows to his neck. The prisoner fell forward, and the small boy cut the bonds around his legs.

"You are going to the hospital now and re[illegible] ceive medical attention," the captain told Ugwu. They put him unbound in the bed of the truck and took him away.

For a while afterward we stood around [illegible] cussing his case. Nobody seemed to believe the young man's story. I said that when I got home I would call Charles Taylor's American attorney and lodge some kind of protest and write an article that, if it had a happy ending for Benjamin, would help Charles Taylor in the propaganda war. I didn't know what else I could do, except to mention it also to the President himself. "Will I actually be seeing Charles Taylor in our current lifetimes?" I asked Sebo.

"Yes. The captain says we can go now."

"Go where?"

"Go here. To the President. Here."

At this point even more small boys surrounded us. The captain led us all out of the dell and [illegible] a path that turned steeply uphill, and within a hundred paces we were trudging up a bare knoll, and [illegible] up stone steps toward the back end of a [illegible] nor mansion standing under a dark cloudscape and looking over the endless sea of banana plan[illegible]

We passed over a flagstone patio perhaps [illegible] the area of a football field where gunmen, a co[illegible] ple of dozen or more, lounged around an empty swimming pool. President Taylor waited in a lounge chair with his legs stretched out, and he wore a blue-gray jogging suit accented, I believe is the term, with vermilion striping along the seams of the pants and around the crew neck and the cuffs of the long-sleeved sweatshirt. As soon as the introductions were made and we were se[illegible]

I put my recorder on the low glass table be-
een us. Joseph Baba sat with us. Dr. Sebe als
I asked all the questions, and the President did
nost all the talking. Because I didn't know
at I was doing and turned the device toward
e wind, the recording is almost unintelligible.
the best of my perishing recollection, this is
at he told us:

"I started," he said, "with a shotgun
d three rifles and a few dozen men
ıind me. The first garrison we came
put up no resistance, they ran with-
t a fight. My dear, they thought we
d a multitude. It was dark, it was
ght, and they just assumed. Their
lt and their corruption magnified
eir enemies in their sight. Now we
d arms to take the next garrison.
neral Varney and Prince Johnson,
ısoned military men, lifelong sol-
rs, joined our cause. Of course with
ny of the troops under them. Sud-
ıly we'd become formidable!

"We camped a few dozen miles from
nrovia and fell to arguing about
ategy. Colonel Varney and Prince
ınson elected to move in, to take the
y. They surrounded the Presiden-
l Mansion and began shelling here
d there randomly and stupidly. It
ked like our group would have to move against
em. But your American ambassador to the
ory Coast came to see me in the middle of the
ght with a bunch from the CIA. Oh yes. They
t appeared at our perimeter suddenly from the
kness, out of thin air.

"What your ambassador told me was that if I
ited, if I didn't plunge the capital into bloodsh
tle, the U.S. would back me one hundred per
ıt. They and the West African peacekeepers
uld quickly take care of Prince Johnson, and
ould be installed as president of Liberia. So I
ted in the bush until the rains started and it
too late to move. Meanwhile Prince Johnson
ed the president and the city was divided
ong the peacekeepers and Johnson's forces,
l the U.S. suddenly backed Sawyer as an in-
m president of Liberia. They lied to me. Why
they do that?

The U.S. is believed universally to be pulling
ngs, almost godlike. I'm not a child, my dear.
alize it's a myth. But I tell you now that in the
ddle of the night CIA people appeared at the
ımeter of our encampment—they material
d out of nowhere, like ghosts. The CIA works
nysterious ways. Your government must have
proved of our insurrection at first, or how could
ave survived? How could any of us have sur-
ied? Why would they have allowed me, per-
ally, to go on living?

"I wouldn't even be in this country tod
not for the CIA. My escape from the American
ı after I left
I think they
than Quiwonkpa I was told that the
w as I left
I walked out of jail, down the
America. Nobody stopped me. I came home to



Liberia. What a
remember. It was nothing. . . ."

The
tions for Liberia: a nationwide referendum on
a
ng
with experience in West Africa
derstanding of its people. Throughout this inter-
view his manner was relaxed and friendly, ex-
cept when
by the U.S. government
only faith in me
Small Boys' Unit and assured me all was well
with the perimeter. He
missed us.

My
I accomplished nothing.

On our way back to the
with a driver and one gunman. By
Joseph, Ar
Willie
the President
ming back to Firestone.

We reached the
of the highway and bumped along through a mug-
gy night under a waning yellow moon, reaching



I could see, other than to keep his sense of humor. I didn't know anything about him except that he'd come from Ghana and resided in

journey with me.

We walked across the frontier together, across the patchwork footbridge into Côte d'Ivoire. While the sleepy guard at the Ivorian border sta

and held them up toward the lamp, we

detaining you," Joseph

and now they all conferred over my passport with the first guard.

now appeared actually to *be* guarding us, knew

more English than we did French.

"I urge you again, Joseph, and I'm not

this—take the car and get out of town."

"Well, I don't mind. In any case, so late

night there won't be transport past Danané.

The soldiers came in a giant troop lorry w

a diesel engine that could be heard from very

off, approaching through the dark. I clim

aboard beside the driv

Joseph sat on a bench ur

the tarp in back with

other man.

"Avez-vous anglais?"

"A small bit," the dri

said.

"Where are we going?

"I'm order to go to the

lice station in Danané."

For days I'd been so

cused on getting out

Liberia that I'd forgot

how I'd circumvented

commissaire de police

Danané; but he hadn't

gotten me.

"You're an officer?" I s

"No. Just a corporal."

"Corporal," I said. "S

me."

He stayed silent a w

and finally said, "I d

know. It's nothing here. Don't worry."

The whole town of Danané was dark as

came into it. Cattle sleeping in the street ha

get up and move for us. The entryway to the

lice station was dark too when we pulled u

front of it. "Is it closed?" I asked in hope.

"No," the corporal said. "We'll go there."

He took me into the station and spok

French with the night man, who sat behind

high counter in a purple uniform. Joseph

lowed us in. The other soldier stayed in the tr

Immediately on turning us over to the desk,

corporal left. For a while the man in pu

didn't say a word, just examined the bulky t

phone on the counter in front of him. After t

or four minutes the man took hold of the rec

er and began very cautiously dealing with

telephone and had a short conversation in Fre

He put the phone away from him and

nothing more. Joseph and I kept quiet ou

meekness and doubt. After we'd spent twent

so minutes without a word passing between us

commissaire de police came in with a dapper

gentleman who turned out to be the mayo

Danané.

The mayor and the *commissaire* started q

tioning me in French. I couldn't understand v

was being said. "Je ne parle pas français," I

n. The *commissaire*, an imposing man with
e brown eyes I took in but the moment once
e full of hate, or more. "I plead innocent," he
the mayor.

Je ne comprends pas," I insisted. The *com-*
saire made a motion of disgust. "Non. Non.
a!" I said.

The mayor spoke to the night man in purple.
got on the telephone again. I kept an eye on
ph Baba standing there beside me at the front
. By his silence I took it that I should keep
nt too.

Now it became evident that we were waiting
omething to happen, or for someone to come.
anwhile the *commissaire* spoke a long time to
mayor, who listened sadly. From his gestures
thered that the *commissaire* was describing
interview in his office some three weeks before.
n I'd tried to bribe him and he'd slapped my
sport shut and shoved it back at me.

Within a half hour or so a man came in and
e deferentially in French to the mayor and the
missaire, and then greeted Joseph and me in
lish. He began to translate.

he *commissaire* and I the mayor focused on the
nt, on the question of the twenty-dollar bribe.
y had to ask me over and over and over again
ded now to have lost my English too. In my
e to think of something to say other than
truth, I very nearly didn't have to pretend.
I handed over an American bill of curren-
Had I done such a thing? The fan whirled
rhead and the lips moved in the dreary mahogany faces, the voices got louder and angrier
he same question came again and again, un-
uddenly I told them yes, I'd handed over some
ney: only because I'd wanted to make a long
ance call to the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia
only been offering to pay the toll for the call.
ilence. By the glances among them I sensed I
old the right lie.

nd how, the mayor asked through the trans
, did the *commissaire* react to this offer?

showed them the two palms of my hands. I
ght them together in pleading. And I shook
head in contempt and disgust, just as I'd seen
commissaire do while talking only moments ago
the mayor. "He refused to take it. He vio-
tely refused and gave it back to me instantly."

he *commissaire*'s attitude changed magnifi-
ly. He didn't look at me, he kept his eyes on
ace of his superior, but plainly he saw that the
nding hand of fate had missed him.

ext they took my statement. The *commissaire*
I went down the dark hallway to his office
the translator, who sat beside me across
desk from the *commissaire*. They got out
s and papers and started a long, long inter-

told them everything I could remember. I gave them everyone's name and explained what
[illegible] these simple acts, but the names themselves condemned them, nothing more than their own names, because in much of the world nothing at all can actually be permitted, and simply to make your existence known is to demand punishment. [illegible] I wanted to make them work, writing down lots and lots of details, names and dates and places, my [illegible] the names I'd stepped off the plane in Abidjan. In this way I betrayed every last person who had helped me.

After an hour or so I was done. The *commissaire* escorted me out to the anteroom, where Joseph Baba napped sitting upright on the bench. For a while I napped beside him, and then the night [illegible] The translator was still with him. They'd brought [illegible]

[illegible] He wanted to make Augustus Shaacks appear in this room? He didn't seem to [illegible]

> I wanted them to work, writing lots of details. In this way I betrayed every person who had helped me

[illegible] Augustus Shaacks?" The *commissaire* say do you know this man? Did you guide this [illegible] statute law?"

Augustus was outraged. "I never took him [illegible]

"Well?" the translator said to me. "Did this man Augustus Shaacks guide you into Liberia in violation of statute law?"

"I'm sorry, no, no, no," I said, understanding now what a horrific blunder I'd made, the latest of many, many blunders. "He merely accompanied me around town to assist me. Here in Danané. He [illegible] border with me. I crossed the border alone. If I gave any other impression, it was false."

[illegible] translator turned Augustus around. The *commissaire* leaned over the desk and unlocked the handcuffs. Augustus left quickly by the rear door out into the yard, and I never saw him again.

I want to [illegible] *commissaire*, I realized, had done me a favor. I'd backed

in return he'd prompted me to retract part of my

I pondered this. I now determined that the
That I should have lied from the start. That the
only proper thing I'd done all night was to lie.

go, but I wouldn't get my passport back until my
statement was read
would happen until daylight.

dor's awning, which we shared with a herdsman
and his wife. We woke at dawn and went back in-
same desk officer presided. Behind him ran three
prisoners' belongings—nearly empty, but the jail
seemed full mainly of Liberians being arrested

Petty officials began arriving for work, and the
chairs on the concrete floor. Around ten
new desk officer came on. As an experiment, I
asked him for my passport. He actually took it
drawer and looked at it, and I held my

I hoped I wouldn't go into the cell. It had a
thick wooden door with a dozen one-inch air-
were dripping wet with sweat when they came
out, blinking and squinting because the cell was
lightless. None of them wore anything more
later a second cop went

> I'd come to this place and I was not whole enough or real enough to accept its terms

rk, his face blank.

gusted him, also that he pitied me. He said the

I told Joseph I didn't think the Liberians w
be held for very long. I rehearsed for him the
tails of how the *commissaire* had helped me
Augustus released. It comforted me to go ov
all several times.

"This is a hard country. It's a hard countr
a hard land," Joseph said, his voice deep and

I'd come to this place and I was not w
enough or real enough to accept its te
"Save me," it says and you want to "S
me," it says and you think Wouldn't that
be the best and prettiest thing? I'd give
statement in English, which would be pre
ed to me in French and which I was supp
to sign without any idea what it said. Ev
I'd dealt with, and everyone *they* had
with, had been accepted. The commissa
police wouldn't speak his own name.

For a while I held out, demanding to talk t
Embassy, but nobody called back
and anyway I'd visited several countries.
er gotten any help from our officials, and
long ago ceased expecting it, and at the en
the law I signed the unintelligible statem
The commissaire took back my passport,
I was released. Joseph and I went to a hotel to
some rest before leaving the next morning.

Halfway through our breakfast the next day
licemen came and arrested us again, both o
This took us to the station, where this time I
was confronted by the *commissaire*
himself, who explained that he'd been instr
ed to contact the minister of communicatio
Abidjan concerning our case.

"In case?" I said. "This only concerns
Mr. Toll's continued existence as a friend." I
had it happened? Maybe too many higher-
had become involved. Perhaps they were just
joying themselves.

The *commissaire* explained sadly and wea
that as journalists, Joseph and I both nee
official documents from the Ministry of C
munication in Abidjan. We would have to p
vide letters from the magazines we worked

ese would be referred to the ministry and per
s permission to collect journalists in Côte
one wouldn't be too long in coming back.
The magazine I was writing for had provided
with such a letter, but from the *Talking Drum*
eph had nothing. Without comment the *com-*
saire took what we could give him.
We spent the night at the hotel we'd found,
te a good one by local standards.
supper Joseph told me it was a
y bad thing the Ivorians had
en his Ghanaian passport. The
K. had granted him a special visa
status as a political refugee, be-
se the Ghanaian authorities
nted him. Some years before, a
oung air force officer, Joseph had
ticipated in a plot against the
me. The plot had been exposed
d the plotters sentenced to death.
eph had escaped with his life.
ould these Ivorians decide to
him off their hands by deport-
him directly to Ghana, that
uld be the end of him.
The next morning, having faxed
credentials to the Ministry of
mmunication, the *commissaire*
urned our passports and let us
Apparently he'd done us the fa-
of failing to mention Joseph to
ministry. We thanked him profusely, giddily,
ile backing rapidly out the door and into the
et.
We collected our packs at the hotel and head-
down the road, walking. Any bus, any car for
e that passed, we'd get aboard. Right now we
y wanted to be moving away from here.
Before we'd reached the outskirts of Danané
o policemen riding together on one small mo-
bike cut us off and demanded our passports.
l told us we were under arrest and took us
k to the center of town.
This time we bypassed the police station and
t instead to the offices of the prefecture in
other building, somewhat more modern and
sentable than the station. Our policemen ush-
d us into the offices of the prefect himself, a
ll elderly man who, at this moment, presided
r a gathering of ten or so people, every one of
om I recognized. Here were the *commissaire*, and
boy who'd erroneously stamped my passport
first morning here, and the various officers
'd manned the desk during our visits to the sta-
n, and the man who'd done all the translating.
e were the mayor and the four policemen
o'd arrested us, counting the two who'd just es-
ted us in, who seemed to be expected to par-
pate in whatever was about to happen.
he prefect spoke. The translator translated:

"'You will now indicate your understanding of the people of our prefecture.'"

[illegible] each one out for attention. A swift contamination had set out from my transgression, and everyone was at fault now, not just me. I'd broken the only rule, and in breaking the only rule I came to



never speak of actual facts. I must traffic only in fictions. These fictions will be judged according to their usefulness to the interrogators in the very short term.

"Never again shall any journalist, or person of foreign origination, be permitted to cross our border with the war-torn nation of Liberia.

"Never again shall any official of our prefecture put any kind of such stamp in any foreign passport to allow such passage, unless and until our regulations are satisfied in full, including and most especially our new regulation. To wit:

"'All journalists appearing in this prefecture shall present themselves immediately to the [illegible] upon whatever moment he [illegible] their presence most immediately to the [illegible] and to the prefect. Said journalists shall present to the *commissaire*, the mayor, and the prefect, [illegible] to read, keep upon their person at all times, and to fully understand the newest governing rule which has been explored here in this prefecture.'

"Gentlemen: You will now indicate your understanding of this regulation by signing it in my presence."

While Joseph and I [illegible] like a small audience, the officials present formed a line and each approached the [illegible] took the pen from the prefect's assistant, signed

pound in Liberia. Maybe a message delive overland from the NPRAG would do the tr They can put together some kind of creder package for me."

I gave Joseph four of my $100 bills. I hoped be able to bribe his way out of this. We sh hour. And I left him standing there in front of prefecture's offices.

I hired the first driver I could find. We ma only a half dozen miles out of town before the broke down. I paid him and got out and hail passenger van. I took the van to the next t and hired a car that took me directly to the port in Abidjan. When I got to Paris I tri make phone calls from there on Joseph's beha unsuccessfully, because the hour was late. I ca the States and put my wife to work placing to the compound at Harbel, and to London.

On the plane out of Orly in Paris, the wo sitting beside me turned to me and said, " hand is going to fall off."

Do you think I blinked at that? No, I didn was a little bit longer before I blinked at thing.

On the tray table before her she had a stac cards and envelopes. She'd been busy writ and addressing Christmas cards the whole fli

When I got back to the States, I joined family in Idaho for Christmas. Snow covered mountains.

Why did I go to Liberia? What was I thi ing, why did I do it, why? I don't kno don't know.

I called my editor and told him I'd gotten no ing for him. I said I was keeping what was lef the magazine's expense money and they co come after me and try and get it if they want I hoped they'd try.

I called Charles Taylor's stateside attorne Washington, D.C., and told him I was writin tremendous article that would pivot around fate of Benjamin Ugwu, and he should ch Mr. Ugwu's condition and make sure h been released. I never heard one way or other.

I was no help at all to Joseph Baba. I never through by phone to the NPRAG at Harbel. I the wrong number. My wife spent hours on phone to London, but the only *Talking Dr* magazine she could locate claimed never to h heard of any Joseph Baba. He must have bee spy.

All through the Christmas break and for so days after I returned to Iowa City, I called Jos Baba's London phone number frequently, a eventually got through to him. He'd spent days in Danané as punishment, I'm tempted to lieve, for his kindness to me.

NATURAL LIGHT

Life among Vermont's hippies, hunters, bears, and moose

By Edward Hoagland

Loving the city didn't prevent me from needing some country. So in 1969, when my daughter was seven months old (and at the same time as I'd begun to write essays), I took another plunge and bought an eight-room house on forty acres near Barton, in northeastern Vermont, plus an old Volkswagen Beetle to get to it.

Marion and I dug out the gravity spring up the hill, where our water flowed from, put in a heater to make it hot, a bathtub, and a little gas furnace to supplement the 1921 cast-iron wood stove. We hired a carpenter to jack up the sills and resettle them (the price of the house had been $5,000), a mason to rebuild the chimney, and a roofer. We filled the woodshed from the discard heap at a dowel mill down the road, bought more lily bulbs and cultivated the roses, the rhubarb, and the horseradish, limed the worn old lawn and spread ashes on the lilac beds, rented a P.O. box and acquired a library card.

The place, of course, snowballed in importance for me during the next three decades. I wrote about it frequently as I gained familiarity, and in the 1980s dictated a good number of *New York Times* nature editorials from the nearest pay phone, six miles downhill, because our road had no electric or phone lines. We kept chickens, goats, dogs, and Molly grew up with memories of kerosene light in the evening for at least part of every year, and the sight of deer and the occasional bear, of foxes hunting woodchucks and killdeer soaring, woodcock diving, and snipe wheeling in lariat loops. It was an eight-hour drive from New York to Wheeler Mountain, which curved around in front of our house and that of our only neighbors, Karl and Dorothy Wheeler, but seemed farther because the cliffs looked more like Idaho than Vermont. Bobcats had colonized them, ravens nested on them, and people came from Montreal and Burlington to climb them.

While house hunting, I'd found that the real estate agent I was looking for in town was married to the owner of the gas station where I stopped to ask directions (which, passed from father to son, was still in the same family at the millennium, as were Barton's other principal businesses, and the village still had about a thousand people). Avis Harper took me along a few back roads where a guy might step out on the porch with a shotgun to see what we wanted, then passed me on to Em Hebard, who had kept a gentler

Edward Hoagland's most recent book is Compass Points: [illegible] *published in February by Pantheon. His last essay for* Harper's Magazine, *"Wrestling with Angels," appeared in the October 1999 issue.*



A feud with the Wheelers had begun when Donald accused Karl of mo
ting his stepdaughter, Mickie, while fondling her on his knee during her
its just up the road (accurately, Dorothy said). Karl thereupon cut off Kay
d Donald's access to the original spring that the two houses had shared for
years. Mickie herself became a friend of mine briefly, years later, after her
rents' deaths and before her own, from alcoholism—and her bitterness
s directed at Donald, no one else. She'd seen him hold a meat fork to her
ther's throat and tape her on the living room floor—next to where we were
ing as we talked. Or force the two of them, with a pistol at their backs,
nce the wall for hours on a Saturday night, his "English whore
d her little bastard." Mickie had escaped through marriage
r high school, but unfortunately she picked a cuckold, who
ned her a year in jail as an accessory to one of his burglar-
s. (Hiring an attorney, he got out sooner.) She said her fa-
ite husband had been the one who beat the shit out of Don-
on a visit home, left him hog-tied on the floor after he'd
odied Kay, and told Kay to burn the house down when they
re gone—which was a tried-and-true method of dealing
h unwanted relatives in Old Vermont.

Mickie was a blowsy, commonsensical, attractive sort of
man with a drinking problem, visiting her mother's grave
one she stopped to chat with me, with a son in tow, of
new fiancé (a guy twenty years older than she and miss-
some teeth, whose chief charm seemed to be his Social Se
ity check, but certainly quite gaga over his good luck), and wor-
about her children. She had returned to Barton, her hometown,
r another shipwreck. But the children's switch to schools was be-
blighted by the memory people had of Mickie's return another
ne—one August maybe twenty years before—when, as if to spite her
ents, she had danced naked on the stage of a girlie tent-show at the
unty fair. Her kids needed to fight with other kids every day in or-
to defend her name. She told me her drinking had started when she
s only nine or ten, a "little waitress" carrying glasses of bathtub beer
wnstairs to the customers and secretly sipping from each.

Kay Bastard used to tell me that she had had "two daughters," the bad
d the good, but I didn't realize at first that both were poor Mickie. Mick-
ad been so loved by boys as a girl that two separate fittyish men stopped
the year of her death, to revisit the house where they had felt her spell
r worst early experience, she said, was when Donald had sold a dar-
g, cast-off horse that he'd picked up for her a few months before. Sold
) the local mink rancher for drinking money; and hadn't warned her.
happened to be standing in the schoolyard at recess when she saw it
rolling by—her precious Blacky—tied in the back of the
knacker's truck. She screamed and screamed, but there was
no way she could rescue it, even by jumping on her bike

I mention all of this as a prelude to the ambiguity of driving around
mont. I found Donald himself companionably humorous and irreverent
n axe-swinging sort of way, and Kay flirtatious, tasteful, rather wise, un-
Donald stopped me one noontime outside the drugstore and told me he
going to kill me because his wife had just run off to England and I must
s helped her because how else could she have gotten the money? Actu-
from the pharmacist's wife—yet he couldn't prove it, and didn't kill her
er but moved into a trailer down the highway with a woman who was
ored to have killed her husband (ruled a suicide, though supposedly the
ol was left out of reach), until Kay came home and Donald had his sev-
strokes and lay abed, cursing at his helplessness.

We had a district attorney, elected by the county around that time, who
not an attorney, he had to hire a green law school graduate to do the
vering for him. And our postmistress referred to almost anybody with a for-

THE COUNTY'S DISTRICT
ATTORNEY, WHO WASN'T EVEN AN
ATTORNEY, HAD TO HIRE A RECENT
LAW-SCHOOL GRADUATE TO DO
THE LAWYERING FOR HIM



OF NORTH-

eign accent as an Eye-talian. Not more than a few years back, night riders f
the next town had shot into the house of a black minister, a newcomer,
driven him out—suspected evidence that was condoned by the state p
who investigated it, as well as by our county newspaper. More recently,
local sheriff lost his bid for reelection after being accused of sleeping with
some widow's wife. It was that kind of place. And when Neil Armstrong
but Aldrin walked on the moon, my wife and I went to the Hotel Barton
watch the spectacle on the lobby TV (we take baths for granted at a pop
didn't have hot water yet). Although the spectacle was breathtaking, at
the clerk turned off the TV set and went upstairs to bed at his regular hou
sent us home laughing. But this lovely, rambling, three-story, eighty-year l
building with a wraparound porch burned on the night before Thanksgiv
a couple of years later.

Other "flatlanders" besides us were showing up, but they were mostly
generation ten or fifteen years younger than Marion and I, the so-called b
pies of the baby boom, born during the hypersexual years of World War
not in the depths of the Depression, and thus less cautious and skeptical, m
communal and programmatic, settling year-round on other $100-an-a
abandoned farms, with the secondary aim of trying to change the world. I w
ed the world changed, too, and so have remained fascinated ever since by
flower-child experiments of some of these boomers, and the fallout.

A leading edge at the moment was the commune movement here al
the Canadian border, near the sources of the Connecticut River and in
watershed of the St. Lawrence. It had been Rogers's Rangers raiding
tory during the French and Indian War, and an area of disaffection du
the American Revolution and the Civil War. Disaffection, insurrecti
slave- and alien-smuggling, draft-dodging (one of my current friends was
ularly guiding draft resisters into Canada about now)—so why not a bi
pot-growing and free love in the name of brotherhood? Although north-co
try folk, in fact, were often offended by this new counterculture, they te
ed not to go and snitch to the narcs. Their grandpas had outraced Custo
men in low-slung roadsters during Prohibition, or hidden the dudes that
And thus one of Barton's leading businessmen, after hearing confidenti
from the local state trooper that recent on single mom who had shown up w
ing a peasant blouse, earthy skirt, a glassy look, and windblown hair was
ally a federal plant, tipped off her neighbors, so that she fished in vain
information from them for a whole year.

As a New Yorker, I disliked what drugs were doing to the city, and the l
pies' notion that shuttling the stuff down there was a romantic livelihood
clad. But I was in the mountains for the wildness; and one of the commu
leaders joined me for a forty-mile walk through the forests (twice as far
went with an official Fish and Wildlife biologist) and became a dear pal. A
other dropped in unexpectedly on me at Wheeler Mountain with three
horts to check my bona fides, but thereafter allowed me a free run at his Fa
where the women gardened bare-breasted because they thought it helped
[illegible]. And another let me watch him snort cocaine. If I chanced
[illegible] thought I'd left them the city who was making a pickup told
[illegible]. I would head up, put in a bathtub, and the hot w
turned on. The only broken law I knew of that seriously angered me was wh
some hippie hunters would shoot a moose—of the first, protected few t
were wandering in from the faunal reservoir of the Ma
woods, where they had survived the nineteenth-cent
slaughter—and hold a barbecue.

L[illegible] experts claim true experience is rare, but yet miserly, with both a s
and grimace underneath. We often weep in seizures of intense happiness,
[illegible] my worst fears in my stint in the army, working at a h
[illegible]. I noticed how commonly the dead had managed at the l
[illegible] simply. This circularity is neither alarming
disingenuous, but rather seems to make things whole and complete. In

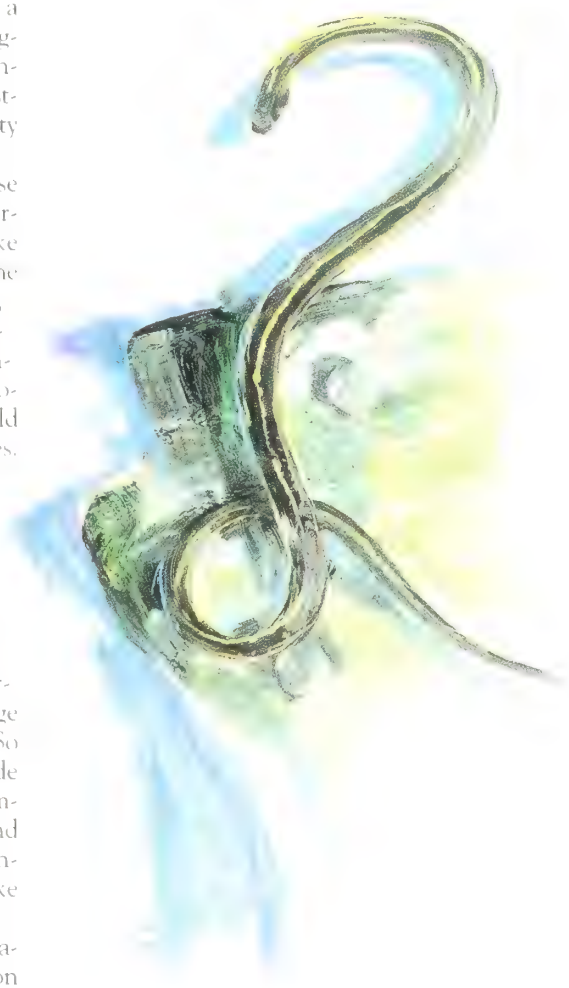
imer, dancing butterflies of pretty colors will congregate where I've gone
side to piss in the grass. The glint of tiger-yellow or cobalt-blue in their
utiful wings may be enhanced by the minerals that they so crave and that
body has declared surplus. And if a nesting phoebe soon grabs one, she
oing to profit also—which is a foretaste of the myriad uses that more ex-
sive portions of me will eventually be put to.

As during my three trips to northern British Columbia in the 1960s, I was
he country to take risks and seek linkage, in a place where the very rea-
that change is slow is because of those many links and risks. My neigh-
ing writers, Wallace Stegner and Howard Mosher, doubtless felt the same.
gner, whose literary and teaching careers were in the West, willed that his
es be scattered in a bed of ferns at his half-century summer house in
ensboro, Vermont, because he said it had been altered less destructively
ing his lifetime. And Mosher has constructed, over several decades, a
ngdom County" in his fiction from Vermont's Northeast Kingdom's lig-
ents and legends. We would go around, Mosher and I, sometimes togeth-
scribbling at a hot-rod race or a cattle sale; and I ceded the old-timers most-
o him, just as he left the counterculture, and the mud-wrestlers at the county
, and most wildlife to me.

To recapitulate the stages of my education in Barton is difficult because
biota itself has been evolving; the people and land values changed. Ver-
nters began playing golf, traveling like summer people, and voting like
go nuts. And the moose and coyotes—which are such players on the scene
ay—came in after I did. The Wheelers' pastures grew up to woods,
nging the populace of birds. Winter wrens, hermit thrushes, and oven-
ds supplanted the bobolinks and field sparrows and meadowlarks. Fish-
(having been all trapped out for the fur market in "sable") were reintro-
ed to the state about the same time that I was, primarily so they could
ntrol the oversupply of porcupines, which had no other natural enemies.
had to shoot nine porcupines—which were gnawing at my house for
salts porcupines seek in their diet—in the first year alone. But in an-
er dozen, the "hedgehogs" and the "fisher-cats," as people call the
species, were back in balance. Meanwhile, warming winters brought
d turkeys, as well as turkey vultures, north from gentler climates
nt up to the Canadian border, to shake hands with boreal birds, like
ckpoll warblers, three-toed woodpeckers, and spruce grouse. In Con-
ticut, where I'd lived as a boy, I'd live-trapped weasels, seeded baby tur-
in different ponds, kept gopher snakes and homing pigeons at the age
en or twelve; then wandered in grizzly territory in British Columbia. So
eting a black bear in a beech wood or a gawky moose in a cattail glade
not an unprecedented experience. And the pairs of barn swallows, chim-
swifts, the green-and-yellow garter snakes, the flickers, pewees, and
oping sparrows that Kay Basford had protected (the one cruelty of Don-
s that I witnessed was when, while painting my house, he caught a snake
painted it red) were already friends of mine from boyhood.

ve now accumulated more than thirty years of close observation of the ma-
rchal colonies of garter snakes that live under my house, not to mention
lerneath the Wheelers' too (which was next inherited by Dorothy's niece).
hough not big, they are relics, to me, of the dinosaurs, and superb survivors,
re anatomically advanced than pythons, for example. Through having
ght and released them by the many dozen, I've known individuals for
periods—old blackened males that finally needed some help with the spe-
exertion of shedding their skins, or perhaps a week of in-the-house heat
rder to digest a last meal in September, after a lean dry summer, before
ng underground to hibernate all winter. These snakes breed in May, im-
diately after emerging, but a pregnant female will fast for a month or so,
er womb swells by August, displacing her stomach. When she ages, she
live and breed for a few extra years if you capture her and feed her earth-
ms during the crucial couple of weeks in early autumn, between when her
ies are born and when hibernation must start in such a rugged climate. Oth-

THE PEOPLE AND [illegible]
HAVE CHANGED. VERMONTERS
BEGAN PLAYING GOLF, TRAVELING
LIKE SUMMER PEOPLE, AND
VOTING LIKE OREGONIANS



SPRING DURING
THEIR MATING FLIGHTS



rotting inside her during hibernation and burst and poison her. I've watched many births and seen the twenty or so babies distribute themselves afterward in little yearling bands. Also the later confrontational hostility between garter snakes from different maternal colonies, and especially between the mothers themselves, if they are suddenly caged together—although their stress of captivity dissolves their belligerence after a day or two, and they'll feed amicably, just as they hibernate every winter, balled in a common mass [illegible] in the Wheelers' basement, or under the East [illegible] old milk cooler, buried in the ground outside my garage.

The bears I've known—because of the eight thousand acres of state-owned forestland close around—seem to have been able to maintain a continuity in vastly larger but possibly somewhat comparable arrangements. Five to fifteen square miles is said, by those who study bears, to fill each breeding female's needs; and I would guess that in the broad vicinity of this notch I've kept aware of the resident sow's biennial birthing of her cubs, and then of her turning them the following year, when a series of males revisit her in June and the baffled yearlings begin blundering about in search of footing for themselves except for a daughter from that or a previous pair who will remain within her mother's territory, as a sort of understudy. I've watched the amorous, ragged burly males, and the disowned, panicky cubs, at that summer juncture when the world turns upside down for them. I've lain on the ground in many cold [illegible] and listened to feeding bears—the mother and her cubs—in the fruit close to my house, after dark has settled down. They were well aware of me, but the old female knew I was harmless, and was only intent on warding off other bears—who wished to descend from the ridgeline of Worcester Mountain to my chokecherry bushes and apple trees to fatten for their winter's sleep—with deeply directed growls. The clocking of her seasons and her years, her shifts from cave to cave for different winters or different pregnancies, her quarrels with my dogs, and nattering vocalisms while negotiating successive pairs of cubs (and bathing in the Wheelers' tablewide spring, until the niece's husband fenced it in), have engrossed me as much as the more recent advent of coyotes—who howl so personably but [illegible] from the vicinity of their den in the [illegible] above my house.

I've [illegible] what we want—the snipe and woodcock whickering in every spring during their mating flights; and killdeer even earlier. Barred and white-throated sparrows also making themselves heard about then, "flights of" robins landing from the south, flocks desiring to beat the crowd [illegible] returning to the field. Wood thrushes, mourning blers, waxwings. And the later sharing of the land, by which my local doe [illegible] fawn in mid-June in the waving grass and full-leaved willow the same stretch of stream, a hundred yards in front of my door, where a pair had flirted and bred repeatedly for a couple of hours, till [illegible] months earlier—coyotes that would have nourished their [illegible] the new litter they had known. Would the [illegible] in it, if she had been alert to the matter. More meaty was the [illegible] calf born the last week of May in a glade three or four hundred yards from closer to the coyotes' den. But the succulent plant right there permitted the cow moose (as big as a horse) to [illegible] while, and neither the coyotes nor the bear would have been fool enough to mess with her.

L [illegible] in Vermont has lately been turning so [illegible] as everyone tries to make his mark with

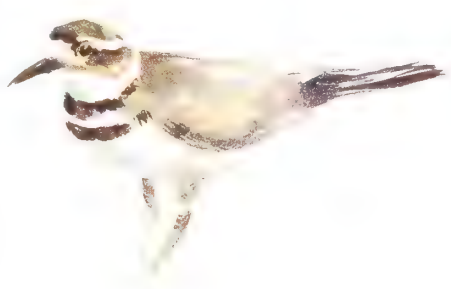
n saw, skidder, bulldozer, or fancy landscaping—or simply double his mon-
y buying and splitting up a bunch of acreage. Given an opportunity, the
tailed hawks are likely to return to the same nesting tree; if it's not cut,
blue goshawks will drop by every fall to try for the adolescent snowshoe
bits that no bobcat has ambushed. The years that you live on your place
itte a bounce because you know that the wood frogs will sing again in
snowmelt, and spring peepers right after them, when the red squirrels are
sling maple twigs for the sweet sap and song sparrows get back—once the
nights are well past, when you had putted your own feathers like a
natch and sat mute. Red-winged blackbirds, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, rose-
asted grosbeaks, scarlet tanagers, indigo buntings, yellow warblers, yel-
throats: this is wild plumage, not civilian, and the names speak to the ef-
spring has, as birds materialize variously in migratory pulses, and the sow
rummages in the swamp by Wheeler Pond for jack-in-the-pulpits and
roots and sedges, and the waterthrushes strut, the tree frogs climb the
lats, and ovenbirds make the woods ring with *teacher-teacher-teacher*,
as teachers like me feel that the term may end.

fy life was bifurcated between New York and Wheeler Mountain—*that*
onation and *these* still mineral-waters. I loved the kerosene lamps, and
the city's electricity, in six-month bouts. And my marriage provided me
a solid flooring to write essays, because employing the pronoun "I" ap-
ed to take more assurance than working anonymously as a novelist. (In
Prot a lot of writers were using it.) The problematic part, however, was
Marion could never learn to drive; and although she gladly gave our
ghter over to the life of the country every summer and did enjoy being
small town, I doubt in twenty years she ever walked more than two hun-
d feet beyond our house except on the road. She was a city person, as was
it she was so wholeheartedly a metropolitan New Yorker that half of my
halt of what I loved, we couldn't share. The country, with its myster-
frightened her—its tracklessness and shifting skies, night cries and oc-
us-armed vegetation.

We'd married for the backup we provided each other—the layers of en-
siasms, authors, historical perspectives, that we filled in for or lent to
other—besides the sexual chemistry and limber parrying of marriage. Mar-
had never dropped a fallen friend and hadn't a pennyweight of New
k brutality; had been so loyal to her high school, Evander Childs, in the
nx, that she'd refused a proffered transfer to the much flossier Hunter Col-
High, near midtown in Manhattan; then insisted on going to City Col-
, like a good Evander graduate, until her older brother leaned on her to
pt a scholarship to Barnard. But Marion's alternative to New York (and
t New Yorkers do need one, whether it's Nova Scotia or a charter boat
maica Bay) was Tel Aviv, rather than anywhere to the north or west or
h. Her heart was there, and over time, like two Roman riders—with legs
ad, each of us straddling two galloping horses as though around a circus
—we drifted apart, because only one of our plunging horses was shared.

never went to the country to leave the cruelties of the modern
d behind. Like Marion, I loved New York and didn't stop consider-
myself a New Yorker (nor did Marion regard herself as an Israeli) or
k the rural matrix kinder. In Barton we had a wild, cruel county
with cummilingual girlie shows—83 for a lick—famous among
ge types as far south as Alabama, that the Quebecois poured across
border by the thousands to see. The director employed prisoners
heap labor at his cedar sawmill and limped because, it was said,
ad been shot in the foot as a kid by a farmer he'd stolen a turkey
a. His son was one of the men who had driven the black minister
t Vermont. And our dogcatcher once shot a stray dog in his own
ng room in front of his small, crying children, according to a friend
ine who was drinking with him there. I could go on with tales of
spiritual penury and hardscrabble misery in these ice-rasped hills.
I wasn't in Vermont for a respite.

I NEVER WENT TO THE COUNTRY TO LEAVE THE CRUELTIES OF THE MODERN WORLD BEHIND. I NEVER THOUGHT THE RURAL MATRIX WAS KINDER





How'm I doing? he asks. Or I may learn that he had won a drumming competition in a previous domicile. One summer neighbors of mine roamed through the woods in a killing fever, shooting any bird or animal they met, as if their deaths could postpone his own. Quite the opposite is true. A friend, wrenched here by divorce, who is a former Green Beret and has a drinking problem. He confronts poachers on my land with his AK-47 on display so that they won't shoot him. Or else, in a more suicidal mood, he'll spread his arms and tell them to mow him down. "I want to die." He sometimes hints to us that the CIA has posted snipers on the cliffs of Wheeler Mountain to wipe him out because of the villages in Vietnam that he saw flayed. Another friend, with memories of combat as a Marine in South Korea to exorcise, will blacken his face before dawn and creep into the woods, sneak behind a poacher, and put a choke hold around his neck. Up the road, however, is a fourth-generation Farm Family whose daughter is studying to be an opera singer, and who, when they notice that the mother bear whose territory we share is hanging out with her cubs, just witness her activities without wanting to make her into a rug.

A quiltwork, if not a crazy quilt, of landowners has spread across the old homesteads that other families jettisoned. A gentleman not far beyond them, who was both a Seventh-Day Adventist and a psychiatrist, was raising llamas, but died taking off in his homebuilt airplane. We still do have our elk farmer, growing antlers for the Chinese medicinal trade. And a man I know produces South American parrots and Central American king snakes for pet dealers in what used to be a dairy barn. Across the road from this former hippie, breeding tropical parrots and serpents, lives another flower child, who bid goodbye to his commune's disintegration by setting off alone on his Honda, Ace, and rode from Vermont to Oregon. But after that heroic effort, he didn't stay; just visited his mother and trucked Ace east again to use for logging and plowing right where they'd started. Similarly, a woman who traveled a couple of years on a yacht in the South Seas returned to work on a weekly newspaper. And a man and woman who had established modern dance careers as a touring duo came back to build their studio and have themselves in the Northeast Kingdom.

To feel at home is the essence of adulthood. And when I poked around with Bimbo, my white collie, looming like Sancho Panza in the backseat window, I'd drive for an hour or so and park where some back road ended, scramble across a beaver dam, a moosey bog, and then up to the top of West Mountain (which is actually east of East Mountain), or one of several others. I'd tuck my sleeping bag under a white ash tree (for its quiet rustle), boil a pot of rice-and-something in spring water over a wisp of a fire, and gaze at the roll of the forest and sky. The wind's seethe was soothing to dream in, before I'd caught my breath and eaten. Notch Pond, South America Pond, Seneca Mountain, Bull Mountain, Ferdinand Bog, Unknown Pond, and land spread between, without houses, barns, cabins, or pavement in any direction as far as you could see. Only a gaudy lightning storm in a menagerie of clouds—or the cerulean blue that we know the physics of but not the mystery significant explanation for why it evokes such a sense of equanimity in us, of peace and glee. I'd lie and look and almost seem to join the sky, as water vapor is sucked up. What I like to call serene turmoil—or the Brownian motion undergirding life—is not dispiriting, because it never stops. If the seas were quit sloshing, the moon tilting its crescent, clouds scrimmaging, leaves dying and sprouting, we would promptly wish to bury ourselves. And human nature being nature, I've often found the effect not different to walk ten miles in the city. The moil there also produces a serenity in me, because underlying the swarm of sights is the same sensation of enlargement. But the equanimity and, cumulatively, the jubilation are quite the same.

I had a friend who lived in a busted trailer by the lake in Barton on his wage check and from the trotline he kept rigged for fish and the night crawlers he raised and sold to day-trippers who put their boats into the water at

IF THESE SCENES ... MOOSE ... HEAVES ... WE WOULD PROMPTLY WISH TO BURY OURSELVES



and funny as he was) dodge proposals from the widows there. Although

steaded on the Alberta prairie, in the grand mix of Indians, Métis, Mou

Another neighbor is a former dairyman, a practicing Christian, shar

but, perhaps fearful of being disillusioned, is less interested in the biol

gling, which can be a mild catharsis for me too, at least at lonely mon

for long, but ebullient, even in the face of unnerving alternatives:

Brownian motion (to use my metaphor) will override the changes.

My friend, having retired from milk-testing, tracks the headwaters of

fulfilling his paternal duties to five grown children caught in the curren

his arms all night, lying hiding on the ground while a Korean "gook"

trol searched for him also. When staying in my house, he's been know

a hole through the woodshed because a woodpecker had tapped

then the man he'd bought it from shot another man

the sale dissolved in legal riddles. For relief, I've seen

I

lot—and the bronco-ing landscapes, pummeled not just by recent glac

alter almost hourly, I watch the mountain go from

king gray comber taller than that.

and-meats Family, the Comstocks, and the Harper family's garage, likew

ng from father to son, as did E. M. Brown's feed and hardware store, ch mixed its own grain formulas from freight car loads at the Canadian the Railway siding, and constituted an anchor for the dairy farms for nty miles around. Almost everyone in the village ate at the counter of Ruggles' drugstore once in a while (also a business that passed from fa- to son); and when Lee Emerson retired, his law practice, in the brick k building, was taken over by Bill May, from one of the town's oldest fam- s. There had been water-powered mills and little factories alongside the lling falls at the outlet of Crystal Lake since the 1860's, manufacturing es, chairs, toilet seats and water tanks, piano sounding-boards, Peerless es' underwear, and wagons, buggies. Also a wool mill, a gristmill, an foundry. The water-closet seats were fashioned out of oak or cherry to s like mahogany, and the carriage maker was equally classy. This con rable commercial history underpinned Barton's middle-class preten- ns, though by now the only factory of any size was Ethan Allen's furni- operation in the next village. Dairy farming and pulp-logging for the Hampshire paper industry were Barton's other economic mainstays; or cutting yellow birch and rock maple for Ethan Allen, or ns for making fencing, tamaracks for railroad ties and Barn rboards, or sawmill spruce and pine. Real estate wasn't ch of a factor in 1969; you simply went to the agent's home drove with him to look at hundred-dollar acres or insur e: I insured my home through a retired shop teacher who told on his front porch how he was an infantryman in an advanced oon in northern Italy in 1945. He had watched Benito ssolini being hustled away from his last mountain hideout at by German soldiers, before the partisans seized him at e Como and strung him upside down.

he suburb of my boyhood, New Canaan, had been a reg- Connecticut town in transition toward becoming a high bedroom community when we moved there in 1941. It still a two-story Checkerboard feed store to supply the relic ns around; a rinky-dink railroad station on a trolleylike spur t; volunteer firemen who responded from their homes to wood- whistles blown at the firehouse downtown that told them re to go; and a local tackle-football team that grown men ed on in games against the neighboring towns, in the . The golf course was a modest nine holes (though I re- mber watching Babe Didrikson Zaharias swatting an ibition round, and Don Budge and Bill Tilden once on tennis courts). The genteel scramble began in earnest at he war, with titans such as Thomas J. Watson, the patriarch BM, occupying dachas, Philip Johnson building his glass house ch ridiculed at the time), and narrow roads named after real Sa- w Indians—Ponus, Oenoke, Wahackme—becoming grandiose. My er, in fact, wrote an article for the historical society about "Indian ks," a traditional campground a mile or two from us, where corn had pounded in scoops in the stone. It soon became a teeming bedroom sing, technophile, or banking wealth of the postwar decades, however nd as a small boy I used to walk the putting greens of the Club with father and a few proto-captains of the new industries. He occupied a dle level in the pecking order of all this ferment, so before puberty I ned to recognize some of the ethology displayed.

arton, by contrast, didn't get a golf course until twenty years after I ar- d. Instead, town softball teams played on a diamond on the river bottom nd the drugstore, as a main event all summer long—and not just the Lit- League, and then the Babe Ruth League for teenagers, but the Frontier gue, or Northern Vermont League, for adults. There are still some local s between teams sponsored by nostalgic merchants who buy the uniforms, fewer; and the men's basketball league is gone. The funeral director, on

REAL ESTATE [illegible]
FACTOR IN [illegible]
TO THE AGENT'S HOME [illegible]
DROVE WITH HIM TO [illegible]
HUNDRED-DOLLAR ACRES.



The fluctuations in how land and the houses on it are employed puzzle r
people (being occupied intensively for two months, then not for ten), an
quire considerable elasticity from the wildlife too. New cottages spring up
the owners live like subtenants in their cars, if not indoors, and the
mals and birds will form concentric circles of mini-habitat around
dwelling—robins and flycatchers exploiting the lawn, wood warblers
woodpeckers out beyond the fringe. Foxes hunt and den closer to
the coyotes (who will eat a fox) normally choose, and deer feed and
down closer than a moose. Although accordioned into ever smaller pa
the land can yet return a certain stubborn ecological value if it's manhou
less: if, that is, the people are away somewhere, or mostly on the Interne
elsewhere than the TV, instead of being out sugaring, or driving cows
cutting hay and corn and firewood, trapping bears, and shooting owls
"chickenhawks." Wild critters can swing right into a summer person's
yard in the early fall and grab whatever rabbits, squirrels, and the like that
been sheltering there. Or when the snow flies, you'll see a bobcat's track
into the cellar and out again, and mouse nests demolished. The people bo
the calmer cocktail-hour watch the wrens, keep a boat, observe, and e
tain eccentric thoughts, dodge extraneous conversations—plus possess th
estimable privilege of merely thinking about it when gridlocked in the

The woods become a proscenium for many folk to strut their stuff in
ticular roles they may have picked: whether as a sandaled Gandhian;
"beaver-trapper" clumping about with a full beard, green wool pants, and
boots; a Mandarin with a pistol in an ankle holster and a cultivated
of menace; or an old-time fiddler, hirsute and picky, with a yoke of oxe
boot. In the 1970s, cropped-headed women and Prince Valiant men h
potatoes, home-schooled their kids, argued at public meetings, and bid f
grain-sack full of laying hens at Souliere's Tuesday-night animal auctio
was chameleon enough myself that I hung out more with these heterodox
pies than with either the middle-class pillars of Barton society or the guys
turned dowels into table legs and stained furniture for Ethan Allen.

so that it won't seem unsettlingly different from where they left. But
hippies only sought to alter Vermont's morals, not its wider mores, and
years put quite a brake on change. They burned stovewood, plowed
horses, maintained numerous farm stands, helped or bartered with t
and private spaces, there was also a trickster, totem-pole quality, a sliding
ability to some of these communes. The faces and personalities were o
tiered, as if piggyback, until, next week, the arrangement switched. Scout
Jerusalem or piss it away? Eventually they did piss it away, for the most p
in six-pack binges and false starts; left dozens of jerry-built dwellings ab
And some tough nuts did hang on, such as the friend I'd bushwhacked
and was a committed idealist, though more of a loner than a leader. The le

I had my dog and sleeping bag, so I could stay over if it suited. But u



nustast who had floated in on the tide of heads yet was said to be sleep
with his own daughters to tutor them in sex, because that's what the
ics supposedly had advocated. And some lesbians were reported to have
ilized themselves with a turkey baster from a wooden bowl that a cou
of men had volunteered to jerk off into, so neither could later claim pa
nity and the women might bear their kids in simultaneous solidarity. But
eneral, a commune visit was cheery—the ballooning conversation and
good salads. And the hippies blended with the locals better than con
porary uplink people, with their bicoastal assets and cyberspace in
ne. The hippies and the farmhands, or an assembler from Ethan Allen,
ht meet in a beer joint and begin to trade car parts, or else ice fish and
a little redneck pot together. They could all use a chain saw, pound nails,
e a bread truck, or kick cow shit. In both cultures, all work was regard
fs of equal dignity and futility, and a night's mischief (if not the under
g alienation) was fairly similar—the junker cars and woodpile winters,
beer runs and dishevele children.

Now that everybody wants a "place" somewhere, people bump
one another with far less rhyme or reason. The guy training a pair
oonhounds on the weekend to clear his lungs of the reek of tur
re stain, and a matron walking in the woods with a cell phone and
ushroom guide—who has a chalet down on the lake but winters
Arizona—act gingerly when they meet at a footlog across my
am. Ours is a town where three bank robbers used simply their deer ri
for the stickup (directing traffic outside the bank as if the barrels were
ns), and then perhaps put the money in a boxcar that rattled into Cana
while the cops were tipped off to search through manure piles. And who
ws if the show-offs who scattered play money in front of the grandstand
ne next demolition derby—from a jalopy painted HEAVE YOU, HOWARD
K—were really them? Around the same time, the grandstand roared to
when the then governor of Vermont was officially introduced to the crowd
he master of ceremonies, before giving a speech, as "a Porky Flatlander."
later bank robbers, on the other hand, were just three vacationers from
New Jersey, doing it (as they told a friend of mine, who saved
their newspaper clippings for them, after they had got away)
"for the rush."



Continuity. How fast the poplars grow, and how slow the oaks. The
nch white pine that I still can't see the top of when I am standing un
neath, though a forester told me it would be all but dead of blister rust
ise a quarter-century ago. The barn and house each have new metal roofs
ought to last them much longer than that. My marriage didn't last (nor
arion even alive). Yet the place somehow did. The continuity of reddish
l jumping mice and white-throated sparrows, two-lined salamanders
blue goshawks, short-tailed weasels and star-nosed moles. The smell of
edars, and the joe-pye weed (like vanilla ice cream), while a nighthawk
es softly overhead and a mink frog brusquely calls. A toad starts singing,
a big green frog—then one of the cliff's pair of ravens seems to answer
imic the green frog in a similar voice. A male bear descended steeply
his den overlooking my house in late April for a stillborn calf that had
left for him. And the resident female roamed sideways separately on a
ler gradient that her cubs could handle from *her* den—catty-corner in
of this mountain notch from his wintering spot—to find the one left
der to get her off to a well-nourished start.

hirty-some years of yellowthroat song from the raspberry patch in back
y house, and a Nashville warbler in front, spotted sandpipers by the pond,
a pair of young beavers trying to colonize my stretch of stream but beat
ack by shallow water in the fall, though they may have pooled enough
kingfisher to hunt. Two moose, heading there, slanted across my back
last evening as I finished this. But they would have been deer, looking
ard my window, when I came to Vermont. ■

OUR LATER BANK ROBBERS WERE JUST THREE VACATIONERS FROM NEW JERSEY, DOING IT, AS THEY TOLD A FRIEND OF MINE "FOR THE RUSH"

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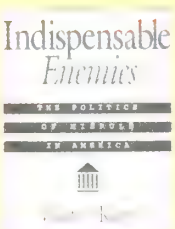
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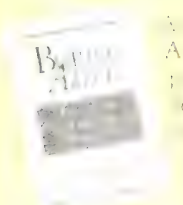


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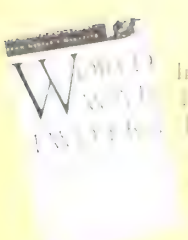
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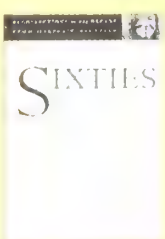
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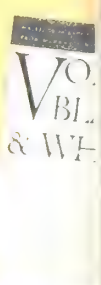
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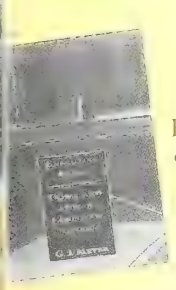
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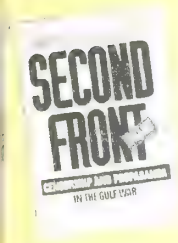
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POWER TRIP

The coming darkness of electricity deregulation

By Alan Weisman

T

that end in probing red spears.

starlops the eastern ridge of the Santa Rita Mountains, a full rainbow blossoms to the west, one end dissolving into the rich green pastures of the Crown G Ranch, the other dropping into an oasis known as the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve. Standing here, with the elations over my head, it's near-impossible to imagine how anyone would dare sully such earth and sky.

Recognizing the ecological importance of the area, in 1966 the Nature Conservancy made the preserve its first acquisition in the state. Every year at least 30,000 visitors come to admire the world's biggest cottonwoods and watch coatis and javelinas forage, and to glimpse what my hiking companion, preserve naturalist Ed Wilk, calls "borderline species"—in this case, birds that breed nowhere else in the United States. Within minutes we've spotted three: the thick-billed kingbird, the tiny northern beardless-tyrannulet and a pair of lovesick gray hawks. "Ed means," Ed means, "will get mad by this damn thing. Are they out of their minds?"

thick, aluminum-clad, uninsulated voltage cables, suspended every steel towers, marching hundreds of miles from switchyard west of Phoenix,

The private utility sponsoring this plan, the Public Service Compa New Mexico, admits it might nee sets of towers. Not even an Ar enterprise, PNM has been bringi experts around for months, tryi persuade us locals to cede then necessary rights-of-way. P chances would seem ludicrous, e that its representatives are usuall companied by Department of E officials, whose presence and disc suggest that our federal governm dearly wants these power lines.

After all, we've been grandl formed, the purpose is "to connec existing electrical systems of the U ed States of America and the U States of Mexico." As if that just everything, justified, for instance ta that Ed Wilk and his collea show me on bird mortality: a co vative estimate finds that each 50,000,000 birds die due to colli caused when power lines and t mission towers disrupt their na migratory cues, or simply from trocution. Hawks and eagles, w great wingspans can easily brush wires at once, are especially vulner several newly released California dors have died exactly this way.

The notion of ramming elect towers through our communit ranches, and this priceless refuge to touch wires with Mexico—s suspiciously of the 1994 North A ican Free Trade Agreement, m to heap prosperity on Americ Canadians, and Mexicans thro the munificence of a trilateral "f market. The claim evokes widesp scorn around here, given our ring view of the dangerous, troubled n

r northern Mexico has become
the past decade. This latest sal
against natural splendor comes
ntesy of the same forces who
ught us NAFTA, but it will not be
ered by just those of us down here
the border. This new free market
acea is coming to you too, com
te with complications that maybe
n't as striking as a billion watts st
g overhead but are sufficiently in-
ous to make one wistful for what-
r it's supposed to cure.

Reports of California's chaotic pow-
hortages, blackouts, and price spikes
e at least vaguely acquainted the
of the country
h the culprit. It's
ctricity deregula-
n—a phrase so
ary that most
ple just skip the
paganda about
petition slashing
flab from out-
ded utility mo-
olies and hang up
en telemarketers
rrupt supper with
another irre-
ible "consumer
ice"—in this case,
ually picking our
power supplier.
low exciting.
ase: As long as
t still comes on
n we flick the switch, don't both-
s. But, as some have already dis-
ered, retail electricity deregula-
promises to affect us far more
the 1980s breakup of the Bell
phone monopoly, which is the
logy most often and imprecisely
oked to explain it. Billed as a ben-
to consumers, deregulation is now
g branded an economic and en-
nmental nightmare by a growing
n of critics. Yet oddly, many vet-
defenders of consumer rights and
environment contend that dereg-
ion's biggest problem is that
it doesn't go nearly far
enough.



In the world as we used to
w it," Tony Como announces to
atch of wary ranchers in Socor-
gona, "utilities generated power,
smitted it over long distances to
communities, stepped the voltage
and distributed it to homes and busi-
nesses." All true, agreed the
deputy director of the Energy
Regulation Bureau of the New Mexico
Public Utility Commission, but the
plan that most legislators "there
are now" is not the one you're
called to consider that only half of power
plants. There are companies that own the transmission lines
and control the operation of the
companies that get electricity
to users."

For the next twenty minutes Como
tries to explain the multimillion-dollar
and state regulatory changes that
resulted in PNM's plan. It all began
in 1992 when Congress ruled that
owners of transmission lines must lease
them to [illegible] companies,
including their competitors, on terms
to [illegible] prevent the
part of the country
purchased and resold by a utility in
another. [illegible]
electricity companies. Congress left
retail customers [illegible]
and residential
entrepreneurs [illegible]
ing prohibited the states from doing
so. In 1996, New Hampshire, whose
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]



isting easements with local ener
distributors, or by zigzagging over fe
eral and state lands. "What gives y
people the right to come into A
ona and do this?" the silver-hair
rancher demands of PNM officials.

"I'll explain," Como interjects. A
a newly deregulated former mono
oly, he says, PNM no longer enjo
the security of being the only ele
tricity supplier in Albuquerque. Wi
aggressive start-up gencos coming
line, and utilities across Ameri
launching genco subsidiaries to ste
one another's formerly captive cu
tomers, everyone needs to find ne
ways to make mone
And with Mexico
electrical needs risi
8 percent annuall
largely to accomm
date U.S. manufactu
ers who have rush
down there sin
NAFTA, the country
Comisión Federal d
Electricidad has ma
overtures to U.S. ut
ities eager to feed in
its grid. Small inte
connections have e
isted for years, main
along the Texas a
California borders. B
Baja California is a
island grid, out of syn
with the rest of Mex
co, and Texas, with s
many power plants that it's bare
linked to other states, essentially has
own grid. So the easiest way to conne
the major U.S. and Mexican systen
means coming through either Ne
Mexico or Arizona.

With this line, Como says, not o
ly could PNM sell power to Mexico
charge other companies doing so a l
crative toll but in the untettered ma
ket envisioned by NAFTA's architect
energy and savings would flow bot
ways. As power demand drops durin
afternoon siesta in Mexico, kilowat
there become temporarily cheaper. Er
gy traders in Arizona could buy Mex
can electricity while Mexicans a
napping and then switch to anywher
else on the continent where the pric
is inviting. Likewise, as Mexicans retur
to work and turn on office lights, th
Comisión Federal can buy excess c

its from Arizona using less pow
s the desert cools at night or from
ichever U.S. supplier can offer the
t deal. One of the central tenets of
egulation is that the cheapest elec
ity is always the best, which is ex
ly what environmentalists fear. With
tomers in both countries scrambling
buy at bargain rates, the incentive
l be to favor cheap, dirty power from,
, old grandfathered plants in Ohio
coal burners in Piedras Negras,
ahuila, where pollution monitoring
ix. For the small price of an quali-
prices throughout North America
will seek their lowest level,
as naturally as does water

r's surprisingly easy to forget that
computer revolution, and the au-
nobile, manufacturing, and scien-
ic epochs before it, all flow from
rhaps the greatest transformation
at human society has ever wit-
ssed: the harnessing of electricity.
the early years following Edison's
ventions, as electricity usage in
merica leaped irrevocably from
velty to necessity, rival power
mpanies—especially those owned
Edison and Westinghouse—hired
ons to chop down one another's
les and obscured urban skies with
derwebs of redundant wires. This
attle of the Currents" finally
ompted the government to inter-
ne, and regulated electric monopo-
s were born, each obliged to pro-
le service to any area customer
lling to pay. Instead of competition
fining what the market could bear,
blic utility commissions calculated
es according to the price of pow
—which depended on the type of
l, and the cost and maintenance
the generating plant and wires
d whatever they judged the public
uld reasonably afford. Both utilities
d customers complained a lot, but
e system functioned, albeit subject
inevitable abuses that monopoly
nditions spawn

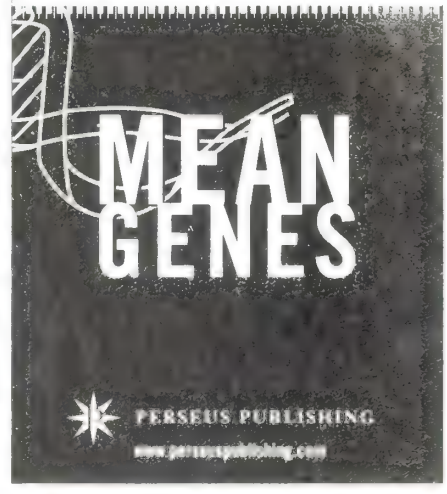
As society's electricity dependency
epened, people grew frantic when-
er the power went down. Utilities
ilt backup plants and more lines, and
on learned to economize by sharing
me facilities and by bailing one an-
her out in emergencies. Formerly is-
aded systems began to link up, and

the result was the biggest man-made
structure on earth: the great Amer-
can power grid, today containing
enough wire to reach the moon and
back, and nearly to the moon again.
The grid remains an awesome achieve-
ment and, given its complexity, amaz-
ingly reliable—except when links back
fire, such as in 1965, when a single
tripped circuit in Ontario kindled a
chain reaction of overloads that dark-
ened much of the eastern seaboard.

The solution to such outages
seemed to be more connections and
more generators, especially those de-
vised to run on a fuel so miraculous
that electricity, we were assured, would
soon become too cheap to meter. Such
claims about the glories of nuclear
power proved dramatically untrue, but
the 1970s Arab oil embargo spooked
us so far beyond reason that over the
following decade the number of U.S.
nuclear plants tripled. In fact, the
biggest, most expensive of these plants
is one reason the ranchers in Sasabe
are so angry.

One hundred and fifty miles to the
north, the nine cooling towers of Palo
Verde Nuclear Generating Station em-
anate great puffs of vapor that weirdly
resemble giant enoki mushrooms as
they rise a mile over the desert creo-
sote flats. Each tower evaporates
15,000 gallons of water per minute to
cool Palo Verde's three uranium fis-
sion reactors, which—via the biggest
turbine assemblies General Electric
ever manufactured—generate a con-
stant 3,810 megawatts, making this
plant the nation's largest power pro-
ducer. With 2,100 employees and its
own police and fire departments, Palo
Verde is practically a self-contained
town in the desert. It is also one of the
last of America's nuclear plants, com-
missioned in 1973 but not completed
until the late 1980s at a cost of $9 bil-
lion. To build it, PNM—a limited 10
percent partner—and other utilities
such as Arizona Public Service each
indebted themselves for hundreds of
millions with the assurance that over
Palo Verde's forty-year life expectancy
they could tack those construction
charges onto electric bills that cus-
tomers had no choice but to pay. But
under deregulation, start-ups that aren't
saddled with old exorbitant nukes (us-
ing instead currently inexpensive nat-

They're determined
to make you fat and
spend your money.



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stranded cost. Besides antiquated nuclear machine, there [illegible] culable implementation expenses in switching to retail competition. And much of a utility's net worth depends on the future price of power, conveniently meaning that if electricity gets cheaper, as promised under deregulation, more old debt may become stranded. PNM's own stranded-cost estimates are so vague—ranging from $119 to $700 million—that New Mexico lawmakers have agreed to let the company bill ratepayers for 50 percent of their current debt to start and then to let it petition the legislature for more "relief" in the future. Which PNM undoubtedly will. In many other states, utilities have convinced legislators to allow them to recover up to [illegible] percent of stranded costs from consumers.

Next to the compound containing Palo Verde's three concrete reactor domes, a chain-link fence topped by barbed wire surrounds banks of transformers and wishbone-shaped steel towers. The reactors feed power into them. But each day up to half the energy in the western U.S. grid is also traded through this switchyard. Five main transmission lines radiate between this power hub and Los Angeles, San Diego, the Farmington coal-plant complex, and two toward Phoenix. If PNM [illegible] will be the Mexican [illegible] of the routes proposed by the DOE. Although the Altar Valley [illegible] suspect that PNM needs this line to sell nuclear energy from its onerous Palo Verde investment, in truth, [illegible]

The [illegible] SRP—Salt River Project, a state-run utility [illegible]

[illegible] building in central Phoenix top[illegible] with microwave dishes pointing [illegible] all directions, a red-haired SRP [illegible] trader named Perry Lehman [illegible] his twelve-hour shift at a con[illegible] that's constantly manned. Above [illegible] head four TV monitors are tuned [illegible] the Weather Channel, its MSNC [illegible] competitor, CNN, and a channel [illegible] that Bloomberg has dedicated [illegible] power futures; before him are mul[illegible]ple computers, digital readouts, [illegible] a squiggling pencil graph that chr[illegible] electric power flowing to and fr[illegible] SRP. Every four seconds the roof[illegible] microwave dishes receive data fr[illegible] substations throughout Phoenix. [illegible] nalyze the system whenever a sud[illegible] in local demand means it's time [illegible] push more natural gas into the bo[illegible] at SRP's turbine plant to the west [illegible] to tie up its coal plant to the east [illegible] to pull some hydro down fr[illegible] Hoover Dam to augment the l[illegible] load from Palo Verde.

But as growth in Phoenix, one [illegible] pre-air-conditioning cow town t[illegible] now sprawls over more acreage th[illegible] Los Angeles, continues to outstrip [illegible] cal power-producing capacity, bo[illegible] SRP and Arizona Public Servi[illegible] which together serve much of the st[illegible] also import from other utilities. Wh[illegible] ever SRP's generators near maxim[illegible] output, Lehman gets on the phone [illegible] make the best deal he can to purch[illegible] megawatts, or scans weather repo[illegible] to predict when a trough in local [illegible] mand means he can sell power.

"It's like day-trading," Lehman sa[illegible] "scheduling energy flows the way [illegible] traffic controllers schedule plan[illegible] sometimes arbitraging by buying po[illegible]er cheap to turn around and sell [illegible] somebody else—and hoping I'm n[illegible] on the wrong end of a trade, like so[illegible] utilities during [1999's] heat wa[illegible] when the spot price shot up one [illegible] from twenty bucks to $7,500 p[illegible] megawatt-hour."[2]

Under full deregulation, things [illegible] about to intensify further. Suppos[illegible]

[illegible] turned energy traders into a new tech[illegible] Companies desperately trying to keep ris[illegible] electrical costs down are paying energy s[illegible]

ntry store Phoenix grocery chain
ides to switch from SRP to a genco
Portland, Oregon, because it's getting
eat deal—perhaps a contract for a
ranteed monthly rate, regardless of
at the meter reads. Estimating that
h store uses a half megawatt, the
tland utility will push ten megawatts
o the grid, paying charges on Cali-
nia transmission lines along the way.
for much of Phoenix, SRP is still
disco, so the power actually reach-
the supermarkets over SRP's distri-
tion wires, entailing another line
m on the electric bill.

But what if a local distribution line
s down for several hours, and six
res can't accept their quota from
distant generator? Who notifies
rtland to ease back on the throttle
til power's restored? Or worse, sup-
se the giant transmission line be-
een Oregon and Arizona goes down.
the old days, with SRP owning the
neration, transmission, and distrib-
on equipment, its backup infra-
ucture would supply the missing
wer. But now who's responsible?
ill SRP be required—or have the
ms—to back up all its competitors?
will it simply cut power to the gro-
y stores until frantic calls to Oregon
resolve things before all the
TV dinners thaw?

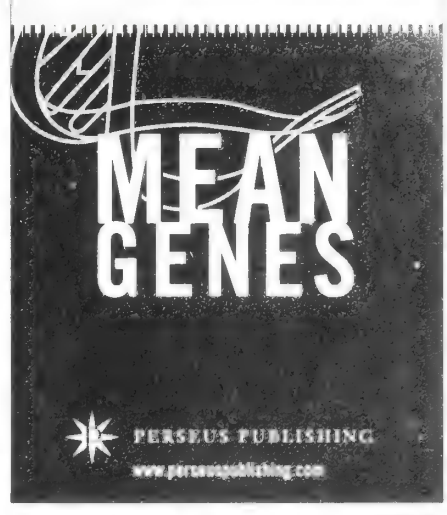
Inside the small, white wooden Al-
querque house with green striped
nings that serves as the headquar-
s for the New Mexico Public In-
rest Research Group, NMPIRG ex-
utive director Jeanne Bassett
mizes what she considers the dam-
es of New Mexico's new deregula-
n law. For months before the bill
s passed in 1999, she and col-
agues campaigned to preserve safe-
ards that regulation once guaran-
ed, like subsidies for low-income
stomers and funding for renewable
ergy research and development.
rty-two PNM lobbyists, however,
t only managed to dilute their ef-
rts but also saved the company
m something that, incredibly, only
e state has required: full utility di-
stiture. Instead of having to sell
eir power plants, PNM and utilities
over America have been allowed
transform themselves into holding
rporations that continue to own
genco, transco, and disco subsidiaries.

"If you still have all three, you're
still a monopoly. Only now you're un-
regulated," declares Bassett. "This isn't
competition, this is fiction." The result,
she concludes wearily, is that PNM's
genco subsidiary becomes the default
choice for the majority of ratepayers
too busy or bewildered to switch. The
service packages for residential and
small-business customers will reflect
little or none of the savings that com-
petition might offer large industrial
consumers, or may even rise, for, as
PNM's own deregulation guide frankly
states, in a market-driven environ-
ment the biggest-volume purchasers
command the best prices.

Thus rural states may see their tra-
ditionally low electric rates increase, as
federal subsidies for public utilities or
rural cooperatives are deemed un-
competitive, or as deregulated com-
panies charge a premium to serve
sparsely populated regions. Or, as in
Alabama, local utilities may be tempt-
ed to sell their cheap coal-fired power
elsewhere, forcing local rates to rise.
The theory was that an abundance of
genco start-ups would suppress and sta-
bilize prices. But utilities—old or
new—have been reluctant to invest
in construction until it's clear they can
make money under deregulation.

On top of having to woo a tradi-
tional utility's automatic clientele,
how, citizens' groups argue, can inde-
pendent gencos vie with companies
that can dip into construction and
marketing resources of giant multi-
service parent corporations? And pre-
dictably, newly deregulated holding
companies have begun to merge.
Chicago's Commonwealth Edison and
PECO Energy Co. of Philadelphia re-
cently combined to create the nation's
largest electric utility—meaning that
start-up producers in their service ar-
eas must compete with a $12 billion
conglomerate. That union was sur-
passed in July when Florida Power &
Light and Louisiana's Entergy Corp.
announced a $27 billion merger. The
trend hearkens back to the 1930s,
when a cabal of ten holding companies
controlled three fourths of the nation's
electricity business, with the J. P. Mor-
gan Company alone owning nearly
half. Busting those trusts was among
Franklin Roosevelt's most cherished

They're gunning
for infidelity.



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Anthony Bailey
Paper $12.00



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programs by 70 percent, which had

consumers about efficiency," I was told

lost amid the clamor of ad

Bush

quotas had worked so well, it dawd

Ronald

deteriorating air.

tovoltaics or geothermal energy.

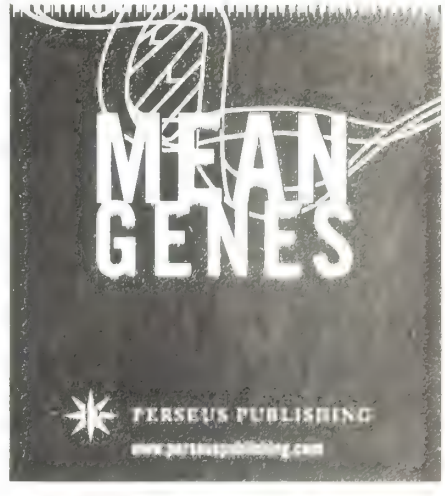
lectricity deregulation is merely
Least market-based remedy, but
lowside of this particular one
, Federal Deregulation. Restructuring
the electrical industry could mean
west pollution, as companies without
oken protection for renewable ener-
y get environmental improvement
n the Electric Power Research In-
ute, created in 1973 by the nation's
ctric utilities to develop greener
hnologies, admits concern.
Last fall, EPRI board member
Jon Cowart, executive director of
National Council on Competition
the Electric Industry, testified be-
e the House Commerce Subcom-
ttee on Energy and Power, chaired by
publican environmentalist Bob Barton of
xas. Utility research on clean coal or re-
wable energy, Cowart reported, had
pped by 60 percent since 1995. The
ason was a debate over restructuring
egislation bill, which some perceive
superhuous even though nearly half
e states have already acted. Federal
vironmental groups echoed Cowart
's concerns. But were drowned out
industry representatives—for two
ys prior to the bill's mark-up sessions,
equence of lobbyists and their temp
e waiters stretched from outside the Ray-
rn House Office Building down and down
dependence Avenue.
The legislation that emerged from
e subcommittee preserved states'
hts to determine how to restruc-
re their electrical industries, in-
luding how—or whether—to ad-
ss environmental and consumer
ncerns. It also fully repealed the
ajor federal "barriers to competi-
on" passed by the Roosevelt and
arter administrations to bust big en-
gy trusts and to mandate efficiency,
spectively. When the Barton bill
ssed to full committee, Barton's chief
ff, the Clinton Administration,
ose own deregulation bill had lan-

[illegible]

gushed, argued for transitional federal
al regulations to avoid power price
concern and pollution, for provisions
that 10 percent of all energy come
from renewables sourced by the year
2015, and for federal grant funds to
guarantee service to low-income fam-
ilies and to promote conservation.
Barton, however, scorned any federal
regulatory intervention. He once even told
fellow Republican Commerce Chairman
Thomas J. Bliley Jr. he didn't think that
states should be given jurisdiction over
inter-state *transmission* lines. "I don't
think," Barton once chose to the pro-
ceedings, "what an unworkable mess
this [separate law would be. I can imag-
ine reliable and transmission would be
operational. Gridlock." The *Washington Post*
subsequently reported that nine of the
nation's nine utilities had become Bar-
ton's "great pool" lobbying group—one supposedly liberal, one supposedly conservative—which together spent $1.2 million on what their internal memo referred to as "The Project"—namely, to ensure that any federal legislation fell hopelessly stalled in committee.
The utilities overlord, I believe, that
late-deregulation measure to manage
Barton's Commerce Committee pull in
Washington certainly accomplished.
"The Project" was made easier
merade to Barton, and utilities fund-
d several events at the Republican
Convention including parties for Com-
merce Committee members and Re-
blican Texas Governor George W.
Bush's inauguration. Perhaps such
influence-peddling is to be expected—such
major lobbying efforts to purchase decision-
ers, after all, are the very reason the
White House can promote the fundamental
reading of federal election law.
President Clinton has taken the position
that "every American should have the
right to choose their power supplier," and
Secretary Al Gore provided Barton with
"comprehensive environmental approach
and "to continue to keep rates down
and ensure a reliable
power grid."

"There are some who argue
me to do," Ben Montgomery of the
the Public Service Company of

From drugs to day trading to deep fat fried goodies– you "just say no," and they just laugh.



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ingly, no one wanted the lines

monsly rejected the proposal. "How

fit by linking northern Mexico to the North American power grid. I think we have to. In the end, I hope the people

they did the right thing."

I

massive thunderheads drench the

Peak. Garcia arrives, mud-soaked; he'd been digging a grave in his vil-

th, deceptively ageless face, be-

beneath his baseball cap.

In several hearings, Garcia had read

ming PNM, and expressed his fury at

headquarters, located in Sells

can border, barely has electricity.

only to their district

dham un-

third of a billion

our Creator's home."

will approve it, now that the

energy exports. Reportedly, Ene

PNM's and the DOE's respon

tremendous public opposition has b

simply to hold more hearings, in wh

they propose more routes

ingly relentless process that ent

residents and environmentalists

also gradually exhausts them.

local utility to share an existing e

gy right-of-way, an informed D

routes is the most likely; regardles

the Tohono O'odham's virulent re

tance, the Indians could use the m

ey. PNM's Montoya respects the t

son with him. And perhaps the

hono O'odham are simply drivi

white man's power.

able alternative for their villages

its purest expression, deregulat

would produce power right where

needed, not pushed through lines t

squander current through heat lo

eration," and it terrifies traditio

power companies. For three deca

energy visionaries have insisted t

real deregulation would mean dec

erating plants to power individual

tories and neighborhoods, and w

rooftop a significant or even t

power source for the building bene

that convert sunlight to electric

are well known, because the wi

alized, only a sprinkling of audaci

Americans have weaned themsel

of promise or refillable batter

fuel cells, which chemic

roduce nearly pollution-free elec-
ity from natural gas or pure hydro-
. With no moving parts, fuel cells
ver ultrasteady current and rarely
ak down, since the 1960s, they've
n the power source aboard our
nned spacecraft but were mostly tu-
ed down here on earth. Suddenly,
the wake of maddening blackouts
l computer-frying voltage swings,
v industrial-sized, 200-kilowatt fu-
cells are popping up in shopping
nters, banks, police stations, and
gh-profile developments like Condé
st's 4 Times Square. Fuel-cell man-
cturers now predict that furnace-
ed residential models are no more
n two years away, an optimism that
buoyed by brisk developments in
e auto industry. Spurred by
rysler's merger with Daimler-Benz,
hich had been testing hydrogen-fu-
cell engines for years, the Big Three
e now in a serious race to mass-pro-
ce fuel-cell-powered cars, which
M's Global Alternative Propulsion
nter codirector Byron McCormick
dicts will be in production by 2004.
"e're trying to set the stage to get
llions of these out there. You don't
an the air by putting just a few of
se on the roads."

The second reason that more Amer-
ns may soon consider fleeing the
d is that so far, life under deregula-
n has proved precarious, even down-
ht disastrous. In San Diego, the
untry's first city to try full retail
regulation, electric bills that tripled
ring last summer's heat wave
ompted city and state officials—
cluding State Senator Steve Peace,
lifornia's now-contrite prime dereg-
tion architect—to call for customers
refuse to pay, and for the govern-
nt to restore the old controls over
ctricity. California's Public Utili-

*an unexpected wave of defections that
an in late 1999. British Petroleum, Shell
Ford, DaimlerChrysler, and GM quit
Global Climate Coalition. The GCC is
Washington-based lobby funded by forty
jor multinational corporations that con-
ds there is insufficient evidence that
enhouse gases are overheating the earth.
spends millions annually to oppose im-
nenting the Kyoto Protocol. The reason
se companies bailed? As a Daimler-
rysler spokesperson dryly admitted,
here may be cause for concern about
bal warming.*

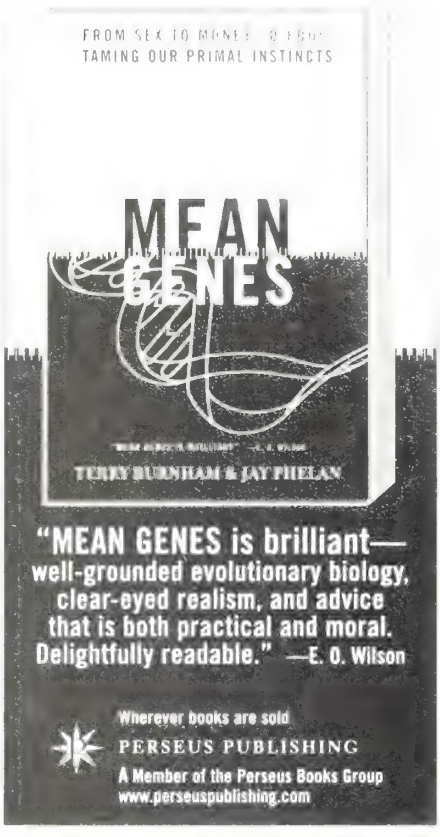
ties Commission, made up of deregu-
lation true believers, to find itself in
the embarrassing position of having
to offer a $120 million refund to San
Diegans to stave off a huge ratepayer
rebellion. As August broiled on, na-
tionwide threats of rolling blackouts
and leaping prices were widely blamed
on an unregulated market's inability to
plan for escalating peak demands in
an era of record-setting global tem-
peratures—one that happens to coin-
cide with our inexorably deepening
dependence on power-gobbling com-
puterized devices.

Deregulation defenders hastened to
explain that, yes, the shortages were
partly due to the fact that utilities had
built few power plants over the past
decade, knowing that under dereg-
ulation they'd be losing the assured prof-
its of their generating monopolies. But
now, they add, surging demand will
attract new gencos into the market,
increasing availability and lowering
prices again.

Yet somehow such pleading feels
less than reassuring—and far less vi-
sionary, for example, than plans an-
nounced last February by Daimler-
Chrysler, Shell, and the government of
Iceland to convert all that country's
cars, buses, and fishing fleet to hydro-
gen fuel cells by the end of the decade.
For years, Amory Lovins, co-director of
Colorado's Rocky Mountain Institute
and energy policy adviser to several
heads of state, has shown that it's a
small step from transportation fuel cells
to home units—in fact, he proposes
that fuel-cell automobiles serve as mo-
bile power plants that while idle could
feed power back into the grid, or run
your house, or pay for your parking
space at work by sharing the load with
the building's fuel cell.

Like the new generation of cheaper,
more efficient solar panels, these de-
vices and others capable of generating
power on-site are coming faster than we
think, and in Arizona they could allow
the energy-starved Tohono O'odham
and the rest of us to defy the mega-
mergers and PNM by simply snipping
the unsightly umbilical wires that bind
us to utilities. At that point, with the
biggest polluters on earth as relevant as
buggy whips, the market will prevail,
and true electricity deregulation will fi-
nally come to pass. ■

You can't beat them,
but you can outsmart them.





dunist,

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DEAD MAN WRITING

The strange, haunted world of W. G. Sebald

By Pico Iyer

[illegible]
Vertigo. By W. G. Sebald. New Directions, 2002. 263 pages. $23.95.

One has only to pick up *Vertigo*, the latest book by W. G. Sebald to appreciate, in English, a writer that one is so deeply for[illegible] far from any conven[illegible] of [illegible] or orientation. His first publication (at least in the form he authorized), *Vertigo* introduces the reader to four interlocking narratives, each of which is set in a different country and two in English. Our author, in a fashion that now seems archaic, declines to give us his first name (his alter-ego narrator will check into a hotel under a name not his own), and a quick look at the jacket copy will tell you that although Sebald has lived in England for thirty years, teaching literature, [illegible] in German.



[illegible] the table of contents pre[illegible]

Sebald, clearly, is a writer dealing in mysteries and lacunae, identities that are slippery and things that can't [illegible]. He was born, the jacket tells you, in Germany in [illegible] and has [illegible]

memoir are on offer, there is h[illegible] any evocation of home or tamil[illegible] even, really, of a settled reality [illegible] the fourth page of *Vertigo* we are l[illegible] ing at weird drawings of "horses [illegible] plunged off the track in a frena[illegible] fear" during Napoleon's campaig[illegible] Italy in 1800, and by the fifth [illegible] have stumbled into Sebald's ch[illegible] teristic milieu, his theme, one c[illegible] say: a "light that is already fadi[illegible] The book's opening vignette, "B[illegible] or Love is a Madness Most Discr[illegible] details the afflictions in love [illegible] war—and the unsteady memory [illegible] Marie Henri Beyle (known as St [illegible] had). It does so, in part, by showin[illegible] a picture of the writer's eyes, th[illegible] drawing of a mouth ulcer, then a p[illegible] ter cast of the hand of a woma[illegible] whom Beyle was transfixed. Be[illegible] his death of syphilis, we are t[illegible] Beyle struggled obsessi[illegible] with one question: "what [illegible] that undoes a writer?"

A few pages later the [illegible] miliar Sebald narrator, [illegible] author's double, in a se[illegible] comes onto the stage an[illegible] his very first sentence, in [illegible] duces us to the conditi[illegible] the voice—the world—[illegible] is fast coming to merit [illegible] adjective Sebaldian:

> In October 1980 I traveled fr[illegible] England, where I had then l[illegible] living for nearly twenty-five y[illegible] in a county which was almos[illegible] was under grey skies, to Vie[illegible] hoping that a change of p[illegible] would help me get over a pa[illegible] already difficult period in my l[illegible]

Sebald's status as a ma[illegible] weirdly unorthodox wr[illegible] has been rising rapidly in [illegible] English-speaking world ever si[illegible] the arrival of *The Emigrants*, the [illegible] of his books to be translated fr[illegible] German, in 1996. Almost instan[illegible] it was acclaimed as a masterpiece [illegible] the likes of Susan Sontag and A[illegible] Byatt. That excitement was qui[illegible] ened by *The Rings of Saturn*, brou[illegible] out in English in 1998, which qui[illegible] ly won The Los Angeles Times B[illegible]

[illegible] copyright © Dec[illegible]

...ction to vet such old mas...
...as Philip Roth and William ...vard. The new book, *Vertigo*...
...ch was actually the first of the ...e to be written in German, in ...2, will surely pull many new ...ders into Sebald's dark dream of a ...ld and toward the other books, ...ch exist in a similarly unsettling ...e of almost posthumous calm. All ...Sebald's tales of memory and wan...ing, it is quickly becoming appar..., are essentially part of the same ...ong life's work, which could be ...itled *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

The procedure in all three books—...h of them roughly the same length ...written in the same voice—is ...re or less identical: a narrator, in ...ways indistinguishable from the ...hor, goes on long haunted wander...s alone through shadowy European ...dscapes, driven by some private ...lle that will not leave him alone. ...crosscuts his journeys with enig...tic historical portraits of other cu...us misfits or wandering strangers ...m the past. And his text is broken ...by reproductions of cryptic pho...graphs, maps from old books, even ...otocopies of his passport, which, ...captioned and often bearing only ...most oblique relation to the nar...ive, intensify the sense of placeless...ss and silence.

There are few other beings in Se...ld's desolate black-and-white ...dscape, and nearly all of them are ...disconnected as the narrator him...f—solitary eccentrics, many of ...om take their own lives, or souls ...eady set aside as mad. We see ...ffins, we pass down deserted ...eets. We hear Jewish children ...ging "Silent Night." The long ...nless paragraphs, going on for ...ee pages or more at times, smooth ...d polished as a row of coffins, ...me to us in an English that bears ...own strange Attic flavor—words ...e "contagion" and "perdition" and ...batman" recur. The initial impres...n may be of Nabokov lost in a ...unted house.

What gives these half-lit scenes ...ir potency is, in part, that the au...or, lost in his own labyrinth, gives ...nothing to hang on to, nothing to ...sure about except perhaps those ...aphic visual scraps that interrupt the text. His journeys never undertaken in a spirit of adventure or delight, and often conducted in places or on trains that have unexplained "unpleasant associations," keep fluctuating, almost imperceptibly, between dreams and the waking world, this world and the next. At times, as he walks through Italy in *Vertigo*, he sees Dante or King Ludwig II of Bavaria along the road; more often, he looks at the people around him and sees phantoms. The world comes to him from a distance and with some dimension missing; again and again, figures are seen moving "in slow motion," and everything is haunted by a soundlessness or stillness, as if it were seen through several panes of glass. The narrator himself at times doesn't know whether he is in the "land of the living or already in another place."

When we visit Venice with Sebald, for example, we are far from the romantic city envisioned by Joseph Brodsky or Jan Morris:

> The enormous cattle ships came in to the low-lying quays from the lagoon and were unloaded by the Consolazione workforce. Without a word, my guide pointed out the movements to Consolazione on the treeless island westward of the Giudecca. Yellowish, sheep-covered shelves beneath a white pall of smoke. I asked whether the [illegible] went on day and night and Maschera replied [illegible]

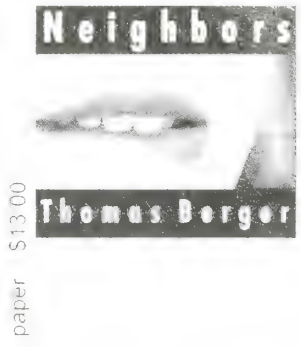
Sebald is preoccupied with death, we notice very soon: all his walks take him to places of decline. He has few apparent connections in his life (a woman called Clara, presumably a wife or partner, is mentioned fleetingly here, and at the end of *The Rings of Saturn*, but both times with an air of death in the family); and when at one point an innkeeper seems inadvertently to touch him on the shoulder, the narrator starts, with a feeling of something "ghoulish or disembodied" about the mere suggestion of contact. It may be customary to talk of Sebald's exquisite prose as "writing like an angel," but in the case of Sebald it does nothing to make us feel at home, seated above the [illegible]

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Independence is what Blowfish is all about. [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

been led to a precedent for Se
s own method of mixing image
word. Yet the odd fragments it
ed to Sebald's text—like his
truthfulness about dates and
names—come mockingly to
less like charming souvenirs
more like pieces of evidence in a
half desperate attempts by the
ator to assure us (or himself)
he is not mad.

s I was writing this sentence, I
uld here disclose, my girlfriend
e into the room, shaken, and
—with a timing that Sebald
ld appreciate, and has taught me,
sense, to notice—that she had
on a routine trip to the office,
a dead body on the local train, a
an's shoes protruding from under
white sheet. I went into the next
n, to the desk I share with her
age daughter—this is in Japan—
there saw on her desk a practice
ish sentence: "Last night there
a fire in our neighborhood, and
old woman burned to death."
rly, the contagion was working.

Vertigo, like Sebald's other two books, proceeds through a series of apparently discrete atives, linked only by mysterious ssions. Across the chapters, im- recur and echo like footsteps in yrinth, and with each reappear- their sense of portent or mean- (albeit a meaning we can never grasp, and perhaps don't want grows more intense. We see, n and again, in different con- s, people waving as on a distant , as if about to voyage into a dis- realm (as Sebald might put it), le a foghorn sounds. We revert iently to a man (now the narra- now Dr K.) lying in a small hotel n, arms crossed behind his head, he sounds of the traffic come to from the street outside. We see pses of "dust-blown expanses and l plains" that represent, we are , the landscape of the future. The e of these recurrences—a sign e the narrator in Milan says FA SSIMA coi Sebaldiani—is to make eel as if we're trapped in a script ten by some fates we can't imag- to be benign. Walking around , the narrator notices, more than once, two men, always together, watching him from afar; later, we hear that two men, always together, have been arrested in connection with ritual murders.

It does not matter, of course, whether these are the same two men; what is significant is that the narrator thinks they are. National fear and a sense of being hunted are Sebald's home, and he sees the world through the eyes of one who has fallen into some parallel realm, beneath the reach of analysis, in which correspondences and patterns impress themselves more profoundly on him than does the regular stuff of life. It is this dream quality, too, that makes the action proceed as if in an allegory (in which the two men seem like agents of Charon, echoing the two who carry Gracchus's bier); certain obvious things have no meaning, certain covert things too much.

At this point in Sebald's career, a skeptic would not find it hard to write a kind of parody of him: he has only to pick up a cappuccino in a railway-station cafeteria, after all, and suddenly he sees himself surrounded by a "circle of severed heads." The reader who declines to succumb to the spell of the hypnotic prose will say that Sebald is only seeking out—in some sense, creating—a world that mirrors his own brokenheartedness and dread; it is nearly always twilight in these stories, and the season he keeps returning to is autumn (particularly October and November, the latter of which he calls, characteristically, the "month of the dead"). The year with which Sebald is fascinated in *Vertigo* is 1913, a time when everything was shadowed, as it seems to us now, by what came soon after, so that even the tiniest detail becomes haunted or at least proleptic. Sebald has only to open up an old book, and he seizes on a dead man's name inside the cover, with an Ex Libris sticker of the Pyramids, "monuments of death."

Sebald might respond that this is precisely his point: to one born with his legacy, all life is a memento mori. The figure of the lone man, in a small dark room, begins to seem a metaphor for the narrator's life: alone

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past, to wonder about his connec
the poet of the cork-lined ro
who likewise suffered from short
of breath. Yet where memor
Proust brings back lost loves, m
bald it serves merely to compute up
dead. A trip into the past can onl
give the very images that he has s
his life trying to push down or
aside. The history of W., as Se
records it, is all plague and fire
devastation and war, even its mos
innocent details are shadowed now
sinister resonances (the local swi
ming pool was "built in 1936 to
mote public health"). All his ch
hood memories are of hearses
sudden deaths; unexplained de
tures or people condemned to sit
mute and stunned in their own ro
(the fact, casually slipped in, that
father served in the Reich becc
the least frightening detail of
And lest we assume that England
become a surrogate home, the
ends with Sebald evoking, in a dr
Pepys's description of the Great
of London. In Proust's great wor
village is resurrected with the tast
a madeleine; in *Vertigo* a city burn

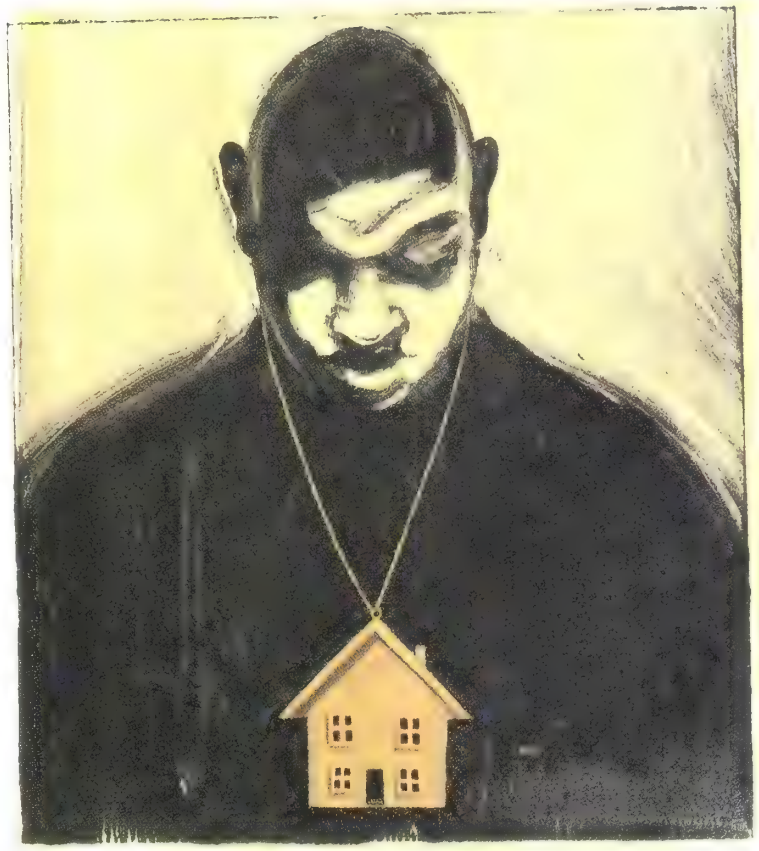
A closer parallel might be w
Melville, afflicted as he was wi
sense of being caught in a tangl
the Fates and dedicated to explo
depths that seemed to him inspara
from the dark. (Ishmael takes of
sea, he tells us in the opening p
graph of *Moby-Dick*, whenever
feels "a damp, drizzly November in
soul" and finds himself passing co
warehouses.) We read here that M
is troubled by the poetry of his
quaintance Albert Ehrenstein, aut
of the lines, "You, however, take
light in the ship, despoiling the l
with sails. I will go down to the d
Plunge, thaw, go blind, become
lines in which we hear the very so
of Melville's madness. Yet the inte
ty, even the delirium of Melville, a
es from our sense that his madnes
carrying him away, as strong wa
might a tiny bark. What terrifies
Sebald is, if anything, the oppos
the disembodied calm, the sense
madness accepted. His is a world
which he can make nothing, and
prose, with its mortician's quiet, l
at its best, the spellbound beauty o
sweet, slumberous, frozen scen

It is tempting, when one hears that

With my Ulster, my rucksack and my large shiny suitcase over my shoulder, I slowly walked down the platform to the station hall where eventually an army of backpackers were living on the stone floor in sleeping bags on straw mats, close to each other like orchestra people resting on their way through the desert. Out in the station forecourt too, countless young men and women had set up camp, some singly, on the steps and all around. . . . The cold glow of dawn was already breaking over the eastward roofs and domes of the city. Here and there, carpet-rolled on the tarmac, had been those who had spent the night propped themselves up and begun to rummage through their belongings . . . others, still drinking a little and then, unwound all carefully away from themselves, lay under heavy pullovers which they had pulled down over their heads, as anyone among their brothers and sisters still lying there could see at once, were prepared for a long and arduous journey.

BOW DOWN

By Murad Kalam



thers came to
am the house the
st year after the wid-
passed, young men
small would-be
ngs from the adjoin-
wards, brandishing
cks and bats and
ives, none older
an fourteen, and for
retches of time the
use was lost to Tur-
until he could gath-
enough young South
hoenix delinquents to
laim it. Small street
uffles, rocks hurled
om fists, young men
iped at from the al-
ond trees with BB
ns, and drunken bat-
es and raids of
reaming boys, the
ashing of beer bot-
s against little skulls,
ains whipped against
eing backs, and once
rtle's own Huffy dirt
ke stolen from his back yard in re-
nge, the front window of his grand-
other's house—it sat a block from
e dead woman's house—smashed
th a brick. Then followed night num-
es, standoffs, and one great and final
oody melee in the house itself, each
om filled with the high shouts of pu-
escent boys, the slapping and beating
little fists, until the police station dis-

patched three cars and policemen came rushing through the front door, through the red parlor, up the carpeted stairs, the South Phoenix boys dragged out of the condemned house, lined up before the bushes, the gnarled white columns of the porch, for all the neighbors watching from their doors to behold. The boys made treaties, negotiations in the moonlit cotton fields, south beneath the [illegible] black mountaintops where [illegible] lines of bastards stood on the dirt: Turtle and some adventurous [illegible]

sheaves and [illegible]
The boy would [illegible] up the house, and none of them, to meet his enemies, could hold the house for any length of time. Except Turtle had always the advantage of his desire.

He'd found her two days dead. He needed her, the woman who'd been [illegible] his mother, her arms [illegible] splayed [illegible] on the [illegible] red carpet [illegible] He [illegible] a [illegible] [illegible] at the [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

dressers (standing on his tiptoes) [illegible] fingered the dog-eared pages of *Reader Digest*'s *People* magazine biography of the Reverend Billy Graham. Adolpho came running down the stairs and into the room in a pink nightgown, swishing his hips like a woman, calling Turtle's name in a lilted voice. He was wearing the dead woman's wig that he removed from the dresser drawer and a gilded scrapbook [illegible] LETTERS, MEMORIES.

The next year there were [illegible] weekend gatherings with adolescent girls, would be sex parties, midnight games of spin the bottle, truth or dare, where once Turtle's little brother, Eddie, was forced to kiss a fat mulatto girl named Beatrice (whom Turtle called "Beastrice"). Eddie had no memory of the dead woman, only the shock on Turtle's face the year before when he came running home, and for this reason associated the house with the dead. Turtle would blow out the candles and whisper ghost stories, his sweaty face floating above the flashlight as the young men and women coupled or lying alone, in sleeping bags on the carpet: it was then that Eddie and the others would stare up from the floor at the pictures and portraits and certificates on the wall and imagine the woman's life. Some part of Eddie was always thrilled and frightened at this, on the brink of fleeing home and sleeping next to his mother as Turtle described the look on the woman's face, how if you could hear the blood thickening in her veins, everyone at this moment secretly watching the staircase in the upper half pitch black, as if at any moment a specter might come [illegible] crying down those stairs. If the shadow of a fast break remained equal to Eddie's fear, Eddie would shut his eyes and focus on the sound of the constant passing cars slowing and turning down Van Buren, would imagine that the street, the dark and sinful street of Van Buren, beyond the little picket fence and its tree, which sat before his grandmother's house, his bedroom was just [illegible] imagine his mother in her sleep in her bed, and the comfort of

[illegible] Turtle gaped at them from the shade [illegible] house. He [illegible] house with [illegible] half breed Mexican boy from Wash- [illegible] for Turtle a [illegible] Eddie, [illegible] damned, cursed, haunted, and so re- [illegible] needed only a flashlight, his Walk- man radio, a pillow. He would lie on a mere blanket, listening to the ra- dio, the sound of the descending and ascending planes [illegible] through the thick and ubiquitous red carpet that covered all the floors, the stairs; it matched the sofa, the chairs. He would fall asleep not five feet from where the old woman had tripped down the stairs and died.

The two boys had taken very little from the house. Pictures and por- traits still hung on the dusty walls, the two boys in Afros, yellowed Ko- dak [illegible] to the Seventies. High school diplomas, certificates of achievement, acceptance letters for each to Southern Methodist Uni- versity. The dead woman, Mrs. Walker, the woman who'd loaned his mama sugar, and her husband in a ghastly oil painting. Some family [illegible] portraits [illegible] daguerreotype discovered in the sec- ond-floor bedroom.

So much had been left behind. Adolpho searched upstairs and in the kitchen as Turtle ran through the dead woman's closet. Adolpho was wild, a fool, wrecking the house, but Turtle was careful, meticulous. Utensils, china, plastic cups, food- stuffs, cookware, remained in the kitchen. Pots and pans under the [illegible] space and routines in the cup- boards. One drawer absolutely empty [illegible] thimble. Another contained [illegible] Christmas bow, [illegible] twist ties, a dysfunc- [illegible] stamps. Sixty dollars in an envelope, old crumpled bills of which Turtle pocketed $20, [illegible] with Adolpho. He was the sovereign of [illegible] less surprises, offerings. Adolpho called from upstairs as Turtle re- [illegible] Vanda's pink [illegible]

the warmth and security of her
nce, as the girls (two or three
ety boy) began to scream at the
of Adolpho shrieking down
stairs in the dead woman's
tgown and wig.

ter, slow jams blasting from the
n box, new couples messed
nd in the various rooms, in cor-
of the parlor. Advanced lovers,
young harlots who even at thir-
possessed reputations, would
e with Turtle or Adolpho to the
rate bedrooms as others, Eddie
the neglected sisters, the per-
al third wheels, those too fat or
ugly or too plain or too virtuous
e taken into one of the func-
al bedrooms, lay on the parlor
et, everyone smoking menthol
rettes and listening to the boom
In an hour or two one or both
ne two beds, the bed upstairs or
Walker's own bed on the same
r, would be heard through the
ic to creak, Eddie imagining the
violence of the act, his brother
Adolpho naked with naked
, an act that seemed so poison-
forever out of reach and impos-
e even when simultaneously a
n's car would park right then
ide the great house and Eddie
ld be reminded of the sound of
heard at night when the prosti-
s of Van Buren and their johns
ld, against all complaints of his
her and the other neighbors,
their cars and commit the act
re Eddie's very window, and Ed-
from his bed could hear through
ear windows of the johns the
nd of the black voices of the
titutes commanding and direct-
the act hurriedly, calling out,
ot that hot cum out, shoot that
juicy cum out, shoot that hot
y cum out, baby," their voices
ed with such fear that Eddie
ld forever associate sex with a
l of hurry, a desperation, a trans-
on, the shaking of expensive
ed cars, the taxis, the arrogance
ndoms strewn out on their side-
s the next morning. Toothless
titutes with tracks in their arms
made Turtle impatient with
; as often as not his impatience
ught him spectacular failure in
heat and the darkness, the si-
lence, the pressure of clothed bodies
together when he pushed too far,
too fast. Beyond petting and neck-
ing he was at a loss as to what to
whisper to any girl (and this was a
fair number) who held over him any
reasonable degree of morality, pedi-
gree, or looks to cajole her into
making the bed creak. It was these
thirteen-year-old girls who came
rushing out of the dead woman's
bedroom (even as Adolpho's bed
could be heard to creak upstairs)
and out into the parlor of chatting
and smoking others, to the front
porch, to be joined in seconds by
their neglected third-wheel girl-
friends, who were secretly enthralled
with Turtle's failure. Adolpho
scored better because he knew to be
patient and because he was not so
profoundly and singularly
bad-looking as Turtle.

By the time Tessa came from Oakland Turtle claimed not only the house but blocks of Van Buren Street as well, streetwalkers twice his age. He found her climbing off a Greyhound bus from Los Angeles in a gray sweat suit, hair pulled back, he sitting with Adolpho and Eddie at the end of the bus stop in the open terminal courtyard on a concrete bench beneath the station clock. He resonated a sense of purpose, and he could spot the girls coming off the bus, always lost looking, carting a beat-up Samsonite or a laundry bag.

That such a young boy would approach her like this, Tessa thought. "Somebody pay you to talk to me?" Turtle shook his head. A vacant house, his house, he told her, sat only a few blocks away, and it was safe. She panned the street for a lurking pimp. She saw Eddie, a little boy, standing with them. Why not? She shouldered her bag and followed Turtle back to the house, and they shared a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken above a Coleman lamp in the cleared-out living room.

"You like the first black people I seen since I got off this bus," she said, folding a napkin across her lap. She lowered her eyes and waited for Turtle to eat before she took a timid bite of her drumstick.

"Lot of [illegible] Come here to [illegible] I'm [illegible]," she said. "A whole lot of [illegible] folk."

"I'm gonna tell you [illegible] now," Turtle said above the lamp, wiping his chin. "Niggers in Phoenix is weak, but you with some real [illegible] niggers right now."

Tessa smiled, as if a realization of her good fortune had swept across her face. She laughed. The boy was so young, so cocky. She watched darkness settle on the abandoned furniture, the floor. It was a house. She bowed her head, gave a nervous laugh. She thanked them for the chicken. She went to the window and looked at the street beyond the park.

"I will take you to the street," said Turtle.

"I know about which street. My one friend told me. Van William."

"Van Buren. I best take you."

"You is very pretty, mad pretty," said Adolpho.

"I don't tell nobody, but I think I'm scared."

"For the reason of you ain't done it before, for the reason of you don't know the area."

"I done it before. For two months. In Cali and New Mexico. How I heard of this." She rubbed her cheek with her fingers and studied the mascara on her fingertips. "Can you watch my things here for now, till I get a room?"

Turtle nodded. "That's my word."

A car passed, reflected lights yawing across the walls.

She glared at them. "If y'all little motherfuckers try and vic my shit."

"Come [illegible]," said Turtle.

Eddie had fallen asleep on the couch [illegible]. Tessa sat next to him, [illegible] on her lap, rubbed [illegible] applied to his ear, [illegible] gave him absent strokes [illegible] to check the condition [illegible]. They fell silent. The room smelled of Tessa's perfume, [illegible] incense her worrying. Adolpho spoke. "Turtle will show you the street, and we will watch your things. This is our house. It's all good. You is very pretty, girl. You'll

"It's like a feeling you get." She turned, looking behind her, through [illegible] at the empty street beyond the little park. "Like bad things."

"Like something bad will happen."

"Like something bad will happen. Like you made a bad decision." She [illegible]

[illegible] people who lived here got evicted."

[illegible] Turtle and [illegible] daughter were shouting, their voices [illegible] the [illegible] the street [illegible] Tessa and Turtle [illegible] them back to sleep.

Early [illegible] the house from room to room, in twos and threes, without order or reason, without explanation, a barking [illegible] the corner. They could [illegible] realized he was too young and sent him running home. Others cornered Adolpho in the kitchen and beat him until he escaped and ran after Tessa without a second thought for Turtle. A nameless acned boy, the oldest of them, took Tessa by the hair and hauled her up the stairs where others were [illegible] followed and [illegible] Turtle and beat and kicked him where he lay and spat on [illegible] and [illegible] him. This continued, bedlam in the dead woman's house, until Adolpho appeared at the back door with his brother's .38 and ran up the stairs and three times [illegible] silent. Boys came [illegible] the red velvet stairs, two trailing blood from thighs and arms, leaving streaks and swabs of [illegible] the wallpaper and door knobs. The next hour the house was empty; the three of them, Adolpho, Tessa and Turtle, sat in the sweltering darkness of the second floor, waiting for the cops to leave the yard, silent excepting Tessa, who [illegible] beneath her fingers. How they would not stop knocking at the front door, the cops, knocking, peeking through first-floor windows, looking about and shouting at the house from the grass below, whispering into radios.

[illegible] three days. In compensation for the ordeal, the valuables yanked from her suitcase, [illegible] Turtle and her and, at Tessa's request, furnished her [illegible] to maintain a numbing three-day drunkenness, [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] that she [illegible] day she could walk, maintain compo[illegible]

[illegible] sleep. Turtle watched her w[illegible] at the house to the street [illegible] sweat suit she'd worn on the C[illegible] hound, and each night visited h[illegible] ter the completion of her [illegible] the Coral Reef Motel on 19th [illegible] crate. He brought her Snickers [illegible] M&M's, brought her lette[illegible] Adolpho's mother had cooked, s[illegible] times sleeping next to her in the [illegible] it only so that she might have s[illegible] thing to hold, stroke his ch[illegible] might take solace, drifting to sle[illegible] the sound of the tr[illegible] thundering up the I-[illegible]

Someone always had to w[illegible] the house. Someone had to keep [illegible] il over it; someone had to keep [illegible] voices down at night when the [illegible] lice made their sweeps, shoved [illegible] cruisers down the narrow st[illegible] Someone had to check the c[illegible] tion of the wooden boards, to r[illegible] tain the facade of its abandoni[illegible] Someone must always defend [illegible] demned property against transie[illegible]

Turtle owned a .25, whic[illegible] snugly into the back pocket o[illegible] jeans and which he was not afra[illegible] brandish. After months of wavin[illegible] the Van Buren traffic he turned [illegible] nuisance to his advantage and b[illegible] to rent floor space to vagrants [illegible] per day, $4 per day for the bedro[illegible] The condemned house seeme[illegible] beckon newcomers from Cal[illegible] ma[illegible] a steady stream of crackh[illegible] and slum lunatics, runaway t[illegible] who discovered the house w[illegible] whoring their way back east [illegible] Hollywood. None of them staye[illegible] more than a week, and all of t[illegible] as a part of Turtle's secret crite[illegible] his forming criminal genius, wer[illegible] evitably too drunken, too She[illegible] smack-, or crack-addicted, too [illegible] perate, too rootless, too burned [illegible] to challenge the very serious [illegible] teen-year-old boy with the .25 [illegible] the last day of March of that [illegible] Turtle decided to hire seven- [illegible] eight-year-old boys to watch [illegible] house from the project playgr[illegible] across the street and from the [illegible] tower windows of the subsidized [illegible] tion's apartments—at $3 per da[illegible] watcher—for any sudden influ[illegible] suspicious or seemingly unregist[illegible] occupants, great bursts of acti[illegible]

destine migrations of street bums
ight the back door. By the end of
ember he was losing money on
ost of lookouts. The flophouse mo
down the street charged $17.50
night per person, the flophouses
Hudson Street, $7 per night. Tur
would charge $4 for floor space
$6 for use of one of the bed
s. He would buy simple locks
the bedrooms, might even clean
he other rooms and put locks on
n too. He could make as much as
, even $70 per night, more.
uld hire one boy to scope the
cts and hype the secret flophouse
he bums and beggars. Hire an-
er two kids to watch the place
p them with a couple .22s. Lysol
subdue the stench. Buy cheap
l blankets from the Army-Navy.
or a period this arrangement net-
Turtle $40 per day, minus over-
d, until the house became a
dache, and the increased traffic,
shouts, meant constant worry.
tle could hear them from his bed
night: a burst of drunken revelry,
ottle of Night Train smashed
nst the kitchen floor, a thudding,
always the phantom hissing of
long forbidden crack pipe sound-
down the black street. He could
ehow distinguish those sounds
t emanated from the dead
man's house from the shouts of
ng girls in the project towers,
ir children shouting back from
gravel below, the hookers and
ns bouncing and breathing in the
along the street . . . They were
cking him, the transients, the
nks, the slum lunatics, the hook
daring him to come out of his
, out of the corner house, to
he hurrying down the dark street,
the park, the limbs of the leaf-
trees like black wires snapping at
head, to walk beneath the curl
blanched palmettos, to walk
ong the roving bands of angry
ck youths, scowling boys older
n he, to take refuge from them
nd the trees, in the shrubs that
d the sidewalk, the project tow-
of looking eyes, down the dark,
owing, watching street itself, and
n to sneak through the back door
the dead woman's house (which
did with perfect discipline) and
stand before them, beneath them, a
mere boy, wearing the boy he bore
their slums, their sworn stories and
snatches of dirt in the faces of the
bearded lunatics, as the prostitutes
folded over in laughter at the little
boy, the fair-skinned boy from down
the street, their landlord,
the boy, the boy!

Soon the house could not be contained. Turtle's efforts had proven futile. He'd moved on to better hustles, and he'd long ago learned to maintain in all ventures a good effort/profit ratio. He did, however, almost for the sake of posterity, of memory, make his weekly stomps through the house at fourteen, accompanied by small crews. Adolpho at his side with a baseball bat, some ghetto boys, the very boys, now grown, who had once watched the house from the project windows, Turtle waving now a .38 or a .45, collecting small and insubstantial monies, crumpled bills, from the half sleeping streetwalkers, the meth addicts, the muttering crack fiends, all the gypsies of the house. They had ruined the house, had deposited bunches of burnt aluminum foil, spent pipes, filters, needles, cigarette butts, beer glass, rubbers, coffee filters, dried semen, spit, feces, snot, piss, bubble gum, vomit, trash, mud, blood, on every floor, on every wall. They had cut up the muddy red carpets, torn down the ceiling fan in the parlor, smashed, for no reason at all, the dead woman's portraits, burned her nightgowns, shat and bled menses in the bathtub, had ruined the house. In a petty revenge one dirty vagrant had ripped the woman's scrapbook to shreds, had tossed her torn pictures, her memories, the memories of a woman who in her lifetime had loaned Turtle's mama sugar, tossed her memories into every corner of the house; and the doors of the bedrooms for which Turtle had charged, in a kind of charity, just $6 a night for privacy, for the dignity of a room that locked, had been long since jimmied and now hung off their doorjambs. These bedrooms had long ago been discovered by the prostitutes and their johns. The mattresses were naked. The smell of [illegible] was as palpable as the [illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

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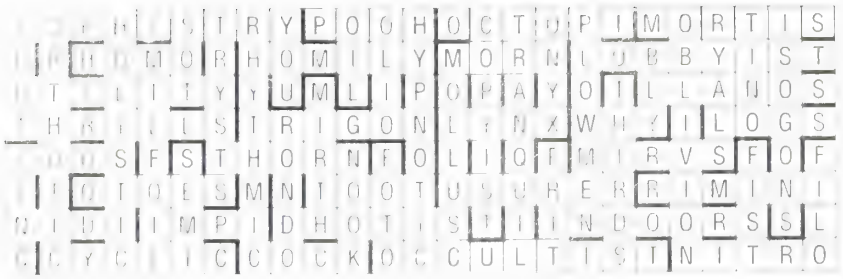
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ACROSS: 1. sop(his-try); 8. Pooh(rev.); 12. (c)top!*; 17. homophone; 22. h(om)o; 24. [illegible]m-rev.)ly; 25. homophone; 26. lo(b[a]by-is)t; 28. (f)utility; 31. son-all(rev.) 32. [illegible] homophone; 36. homophone; 37. two rings; 38. [illegible]MDs; 40. [illegible] 42. [illegible] 49. [illegible] 50. [illegible] 51. ID mirror); 52. I MP-1; 53. D (hot)L; 54. *; 55. homophone; 56. two rings; 57. *; 58. Nit-or(rev.).

[illegible] 1. [illegible] 2. [illegible] try-ste; 6. [illegible] 7. homophone; 9. [illegible] 13. [illegible] 14. rom(pin)[illegible] 15. [illegible]NDs; 16. p(ilow n)[illegible] 18. [illegible] 19. [illegible] 23. [illegible] 27. [illegible] 29. [illegible] 30. [illegible] 33. [illegible] 34. [illegible] 35. [illegible] 39. [illegible] 41. [illegible] 43. [illegible] 44. [illegible] 45. [illegible] 46. [illegible] 47. [illegible] 48. [illegible]

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LETTERS

Continued from page 7

tions. They are simply trying to r[illegible] what has lamentably become the [illegible] al purpose of "education" in An[illegible] ca: producing little cogs to keep [illegible] wheels of our society grinding ab[illegible]

Joan Barone McDonald
Lake View, N.Y.

Lewis Lapham's essay disturbed [illegible] I am a sixteen-year-old girl and [illegible] tend a public high school in do[illegible] town Colorado Springs. Since ch[illegible] hood my body has been a billbo[illegible] Before I could read there were la[illegible] on my shoes, on my jeans, and ac[illegible] my bosom. So I was not surprise[illegible] find that the wall space of my h[illegible] school's halls had been sold to l[illegible] companies. Neither was I shoc[illegible] when ads adorned my yearbook [illegible] newspaper, my school planner, m[illegible] brary's computer screens, even my [illegible] ulation book covers.

My school district has a multi[illegible] lion-dollar deal with Coca-Cola. [illegible]ly Coke products are sold and ende[illegible] on school property. It's all a par[illegible] consumer education. Each day at l[illegible] a Pepsi truck parks across the st[illegible] Blasting Top 40 music and under[illegible] ting Coke's prices.

All my life companies have b[illegible] competing for my dollar, meanw[illegible] no one has seemed to care about [illegible] mind. When I return to school [illegible] fall, I will distribute copies of "Sch[illegible] Bells" to my teachers and peers. [illegible] haps Lapham's words will encou[illegible] them to question what it means t[illegible] educated and what it means to [illegible] owned.

Anna Nussbaum
Palmer High School
Colorado Springs

Correction

In Earl Shorris's article on the [illegible] appearance of the world's small [illegible] guages ["The Last Word," August] [illegible] was reported that the K'iche' M[illegible] poet Humberto Ak'abal had b[illegible] killed in an automobile accident. [illegible] is, in fact, alive. We regret the er[illegible]

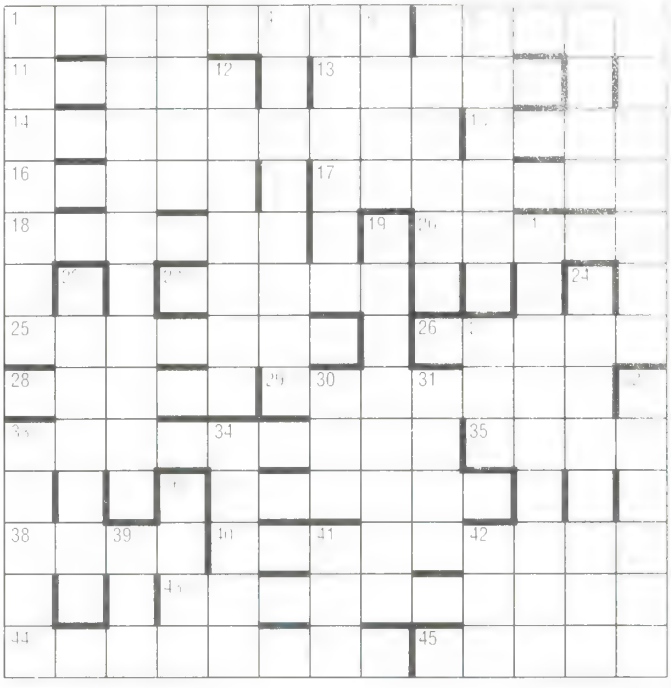
PUZZLE

Input

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

Word lengths are omitted this month, because twenty clued answers require input before they can be, well, put in.

Answers include six proper names. Answers to clues at 25A, 29A, 7D and 8D are uncommon. As always, mental reputrefaction of the clues is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 78.



Across

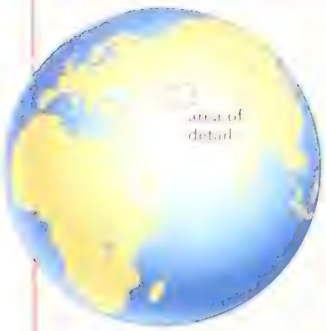
1 College girl gets unfinished business shortened straightened out
7 Gross lot "Not quite"
11. Suppose returns sent in are hot
13 Funny part of rock and roll
14 One who wants things more elaborate
15 Image I put on the front of coin
16 Statesman needs to use a shuttle
17. What rustlers do with head of steer: hope
18 Inappropriate states, say
20 Neck ... oh, doesn't that sound like sweet company
23 Beam on a ship surely placed behind roof opening
25 Bit used in collecting herds
26 Schwarzenegger's role in a movie about running navy
28 A little bit put down
29 Produces spittle, spraying pests
33 Bomb could make grandee regret he entered
35 Swell sounds from bread
37 When dynamo works
38 Old Indian heads in case
40. Muscle in exercise event with rem
43. Caught in duel, nerd played while preserving his honor
44 Resist evolution, it's relative
45. Coffee order and almost the second

Down

1 Kind of dressing put back in containers
2. I'm upset over soap opera woes
3 Some of the best rum lines
4 Attractive rodent sheets with time period
5 Unconventional type of ... and Sandie includes ...
6 Escalate Eschewer that set pulled
7 Hoodlum rims
8 Print choice for reserved Scalp principal
9 Sow beginnings put me counter to it
10 Irrevocable truth that the point of hours always
12 Inches extent ends ... emperor
19 Table how mercenaries eaten beer bars
21 Study cover to pet material
22 Wear in movie I select
24 Pierce bet ... to be quick
27 Part ... continental ...
30 Ended ... and ... angel
31 Close with passage from movie ... to
32 Move ... with ... alligator
33. Wind sink up
34 Doctor ... and ... fuse
36 Fire ... equipment ... Hood
39 Cooler me
41 Letter ... not ... credit
42 Work ... on ...

Contest Rules: Send complete clue and answer (as they appear in the puzzle) for your original crossword to *Harper's*, please include your name and address. Entries must be received by December 15 to be considered for publication. The first three correct clues selected will win a prize of $100 each. Winners of the August puzzle contest will be announced in the December issue. Winners of the August puzzle contest will be announced in the December issue. Winners of the August puzzle contest will be announced in the December issue

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Kulandy
Ayteke Bi
Syr River
Aral Sea 1959
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Muynak
Kazakhdar'ya
Kungrad
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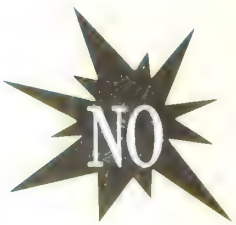
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A forum with Willie E. Gary, Jack Hitt, Alexander J. Pires Jr., Richard F. Scruggs, Dennis C. Sweet III

◆

ANOTHER FRENCH REVOLUTION

In Marseilles, Europe Confronts Its North African Future

By Jeffrey Tayler

A LINE TO WALK ON

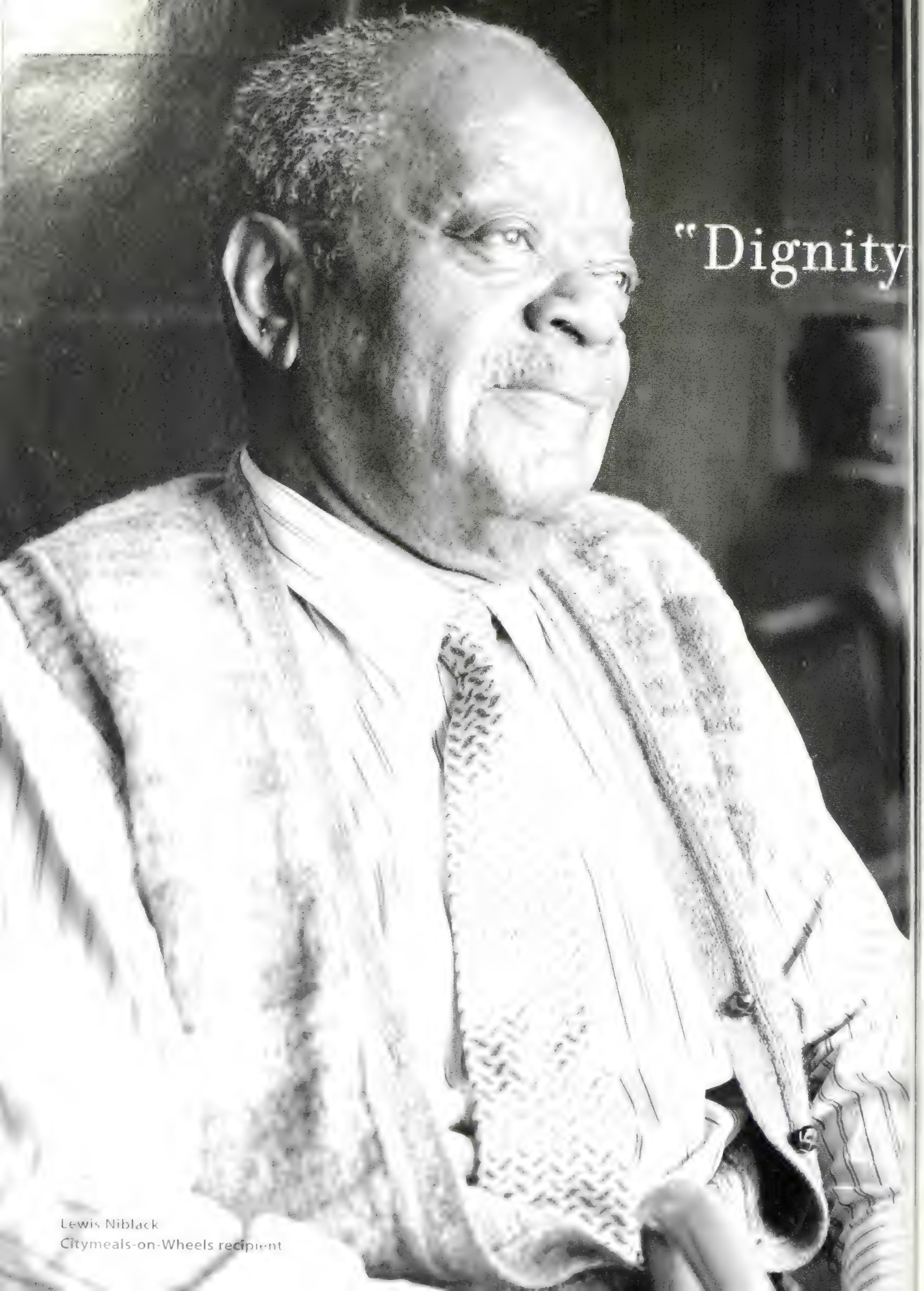
The Art of a Graceful Exit

By Arthur Miller

Also: Elizabeth Tippens, Charles Simic, Siegfried Sassoon, and Ken Silverstein

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Lewis Niblack
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As one of a growing number of homebound seniors, his daily struggle to get nutritious food limited his cherished sense of independence. Thanks to local grants from the *Senior Helpings* initiative, Lewis and thousands of hungry seniors across the country are no longer kept on waiting lists by their neighborhood meals-on-wheels programs. Now that the wait for food is over, Lewis has regained his self-sufficiency. And with it, his sense of dignity.

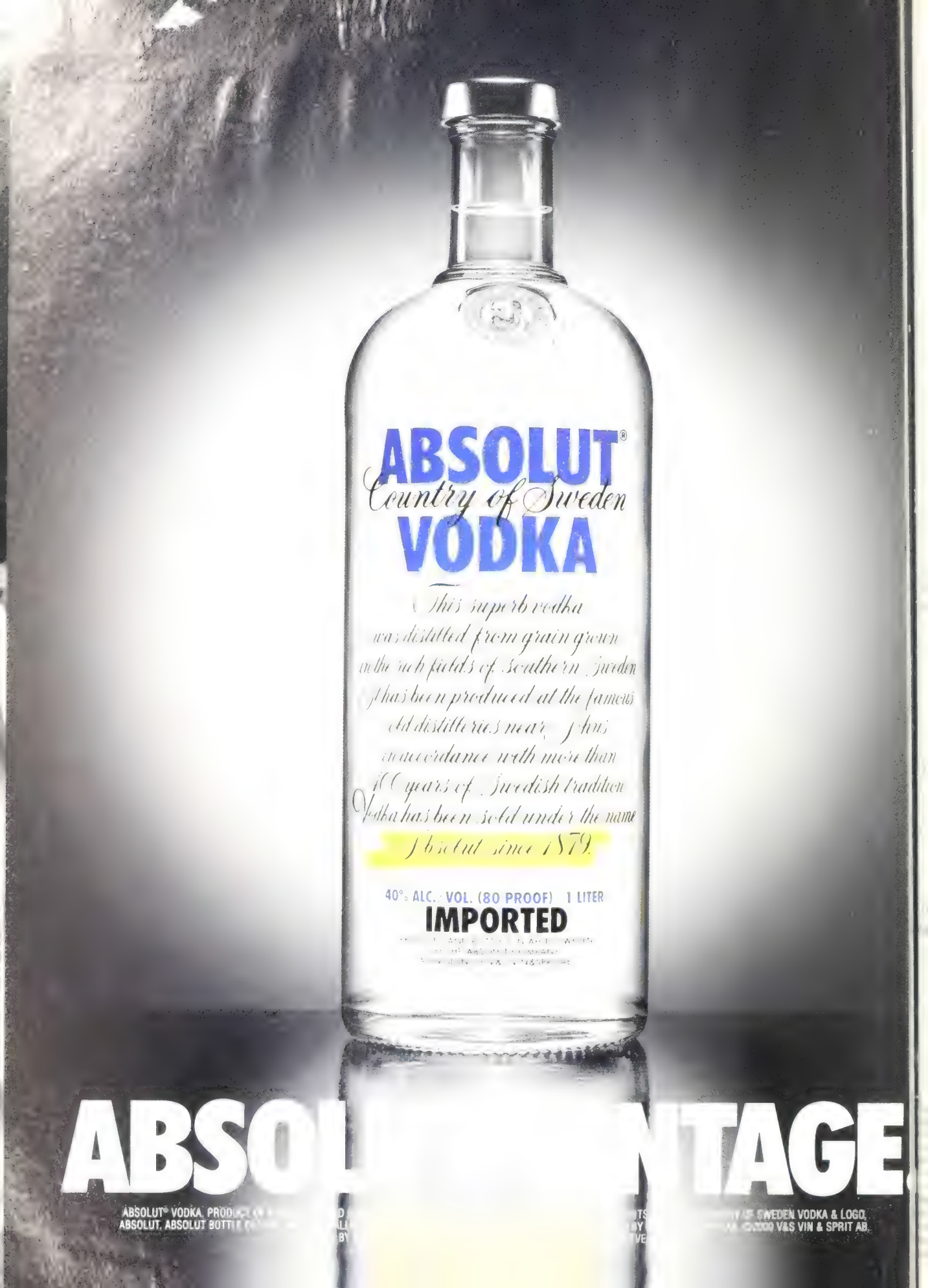
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HARPER'S

M A G A Z I N E

VOLUME [illegible] NUMBER [illegible]
NOVEMBER 20[illegible]

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PARTY POOPERS

[illegible]

HARPERS

LETTERS

The Good Father

crime, Adler again offers no solid
trict of Columbia police never
tlegging oper
credible evidence,
had become an assistant in the
my career as a reporter at Ne
red the paper such stuff.

But the purpose here is not t
on about Adler's faults as a rep
organized crime."

Adler knows full well that
specially when applie
ne with an Italian surn
titioner of a mobbed-up s
d, it propels the reader
beeline to the Italian Mafia—an
ward thoughts of murder, extor
ts, intimidation, and the lik

Adler's article constitutes
of the accusation that she first r
in her book, about which I c
plained to the publisher, Simo
Schuster, earlier this year. My si
and I can only conclude now
tion—was indeed correct.

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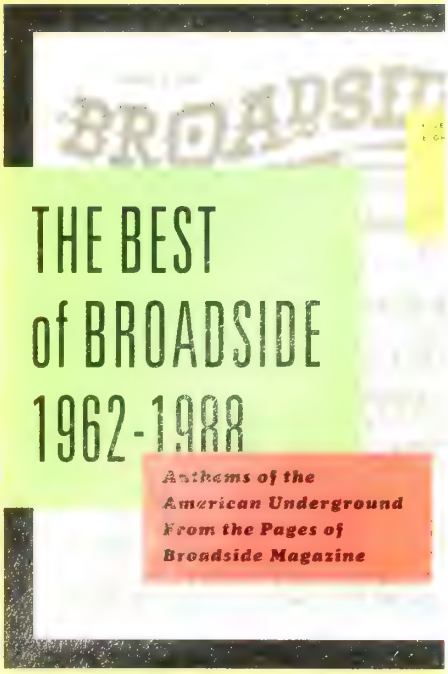
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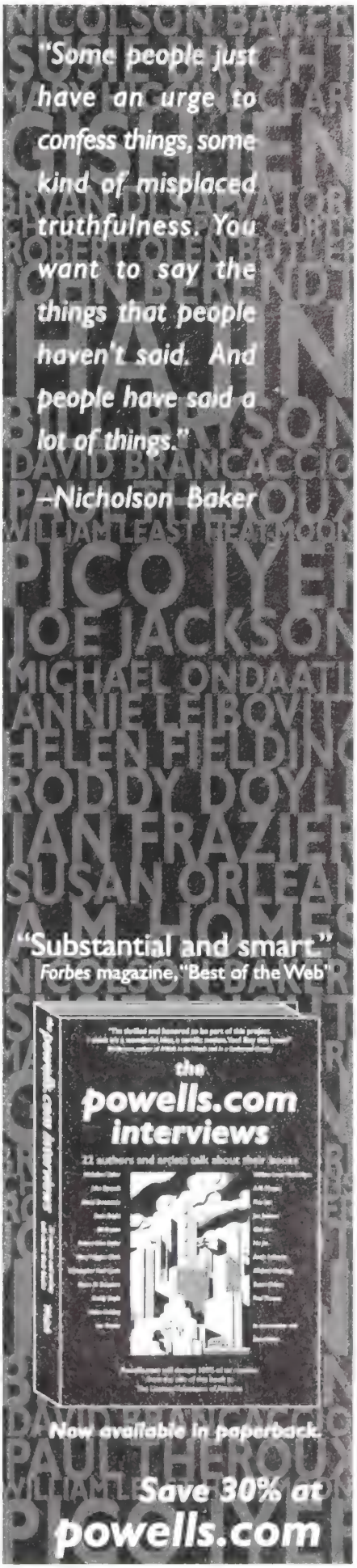
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[illegible] quite explanation go unaddressed. How is it, for example, that the *Times* allowed Hermione Randolph to write [illegible] an editorial harshly critical of Adler's ethics ("A Question of Literary Ethics"), despite the fact that Randolph is cited in Adler's book about *The New Yorker* for an embarrassing incident of erroneous reporting?

It's a question that brings us back to what this is really all about—it's about what happens when you write a book expressing anger at a club of writers and editors that essentially has contemporary American culture by the throat. Bravo to both Adler and *Harper's* for helping to loosen their grip.

Dennis Lee Johnson
Hoboken, N.J.

The sociologist Michael Schudson writes in *Watergate in American Memory* that when he began that authoritative study of collective memory and the construction of myth, colleagues "warned [him] off the subject" with such arguments as that "Watergate was too important and the legacy of Richard Nixon too dangerous—the evidence of Iran-Contra was cited—to diminish the political significance of the subject by using it for academic purposes." In other words, we need our myths to fend off the anarchy of nuance and contradiction.

If scholars in the rarefied air of great universities are susceptible to myth, consider the vulnerability of mere journalists in the scatterbrained confusion of newsrooms. The journalistic pile-on [illegible] Adler has prompted at this late date for daring to suggest a distance between myth and reality in the case of the late Judge John Sirica is reminiscent of Professor Schudson's experience, and more. Watergate, like the Dreyfus case in France a century ago, was a cri[illegible] [illegible]perspective [illegible] is well as [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

set, in which he participated, was
ply infiltrated by organized crime.
tracking these clues to their lair
d discovering (among other
ngs) the bootlegging in the back
om, Adler has not performed a
ticularly remarkable act; any
mpetent reporter could have done
though she alone has published
findings.

More to the point, perhaps, is
at this unremarkable act has
ised certain people to collide with
eir ceilings. Look, Abraham Lin-
ln may have gotten himself a dose
the clap, and George Washington
ned a big hunk of the land where
s administration just happened to
cate the national capital. Nobody
ks about these things, and to this
ort and select list of forbidden his-
ical facts we must now add the fa-
hi...ity of the Sirica family and its
ion with certain goombahs. Big
al. But some people are funny
out their heroes.

l Davis
ooklyn

Renata Adler's essay promised to
veal the source of her allegations
ainst the late Judge John J. Sirica.
nfortunately, the piece revealed more
out her low tolerance for criticism
early stung by a justly critical *New*
rk Times editorial that questioned
r ethics in failing to support serious
arges, Adler wastes most of her time
nd the reader's) in taking potshots at
e newspaper.

We find it hard to believe that a
asoned reporter like Adler, having
covered evidence of a scandal in-
olving a famous Watergate judge—a
andal that had escaped the atten-
on of the entire Washington press
rps—would then refrain from writ-
g about what would be one of the
oops of the century.

Clearly Adler prefers to use her con-
derable power as a journalist to grind
es rather than to state facts. How
nfair and cowardly to bury one of
ose axes in the back of a man no
nger here to defend himself.

ank J. Guarini, Chairman
he National Italian American
Foundation
Vashington, D.C.

The press in this country is clearly powerful enough to suppress the freedom of expression of its own and other authors. Renata Adler's defense against the attack, pressure, and denial of rebuttal by the *New York Times* is brilliant and brave. Her article deserves to be studied in every school of journalism in the country.

Richard H. Shavett
Scotch Plains, N.J.

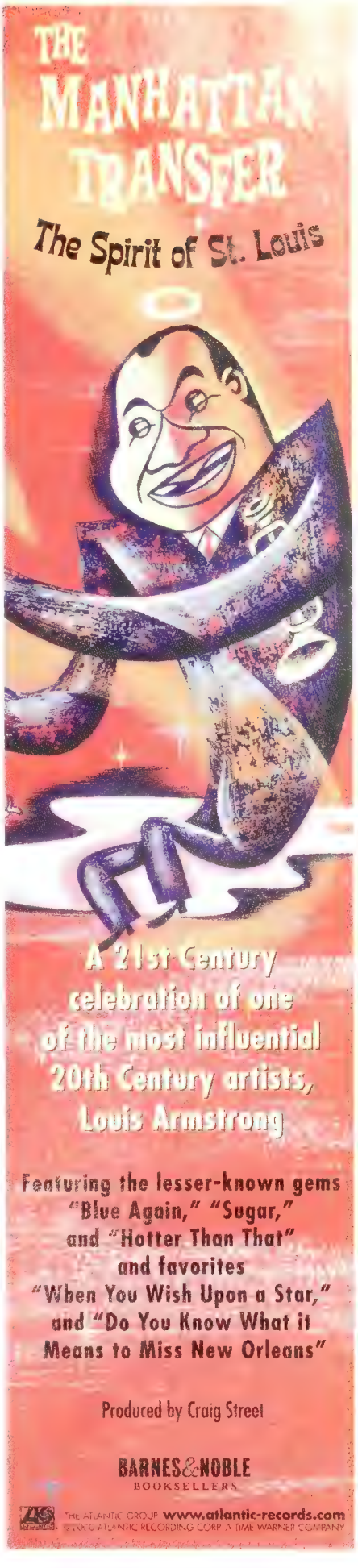
Renata Adler responds:

There is no doubt that John Stacks's and Jack Sirica's sense of fact and understanding of what constitutes evidence differ considerably from my own. Their letters, I think, are answered in my original *Harper's* piece. Sirica's "career as a reporter at *Newsday*" (with which his various communications on this subject seem increasingly preoccupied) is not, I feel sure, threatened by his offering anything like the stuff I write. "What Adler ignores," he said, in a recent newspaper interview, "is that [Senator Joseph] McCarthy was frankly Mr. Life of the Party, giving people hotfoots and things like that." Q.E.D.

Stacks's letter is, in some ways, another matter. In his "hundreds of hours" of collaboration on *To Set the Record Straight* he managed to miss virtually every interesting fact about Judge Sirica's life, not just the ones in the passage he rather lamely half-disputes. Together they produced a simultaneously tedious and dishonest book, remarkable mainly for the tension it displays between a wish to boast and a need to conceal, as well as a kind of obtuse indifference to facts and their significance.

I feel bad about Frank Guarini's letter. We have different ideas about "what would be one of the scoops of the century" and what is "cowardly." (I would have thought Judge Sirica was, on the whole, more than amply defended. The number of pieces in the *New York Times* alone has gone up by two, to ten, since my article in *Harper's* appeared.)

Far from offending the N.I.A.F., I might like to join it. Unlike even Judge Sirica himself, I was born in Italy. My brothers went to school there. In becoming an American, I did not have to renounce my Italian citizenship until I was eighteen.





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NOTEBOOK

Cleopatra's nose

By Lewis H. Lapham

he Inevitable is what will seem to
happen to you purely by chance
he Real is what will strike you as
really absurd;
nless you are certain you are dream-
ng, it is certainly a dream
of your own;
nless you exclaim—"There must
be some mistake" you must be
mistaken.

W. H. Auden

On the first day of what was lled as the Millennium Summit st September in New York, Kofi nnan, secretary-general of the nited Nations, welcomed the assembled dignities from 147 countries rime ministers, heads of state, owned kings) with a banquet and ne proposing of a toast to "You who] have the authority to speak r, and the ability to transform, the ves of six billion people."

The flattery was extravagant—at ost times and places in the history the world politicians have followed the trends and obeyed the olls, distinguished by their expedint silences and mortal fear of transrmations—but it was cheerfully reeived (strong applause, complacent ods), and for three days and three ights the dignities gave speeches, tified treaties, glanced at documents, signed declarations of blame ss principle in favor of human freeom and the biosphere.

The coming and going of limouines imparted an air of triumph to he proceedings, and because I spent good deal of time marooned in traffic during the first week of September, learning to rate the importance of the personage in the motorcade by the number of vans bearing pastry chefs or secret service agents, I was often at leisure to read dispatches from U.N. headquarters on the East River and to reflect on the postmodern theories of global empire.

Our twenty-first-century faith in scientific miracle gives rise to the hope of "transnational institutions" capable of managing the world's affairs with the sangfroid of the late and increasingly lamented emperor Caesar Augustus. His latter-day heirs and assigns, most of them corporation executives, find themselves confronted with rebellion in provincial capital markets—also with rogue states and renegade ideologies, with war in Africa, civil unrest in Judaea, tyrants in Parthia and Lepris Minor, too much cocaine crossing the frontier near Chalcedon, and the would-be makers of a computer-enhanced Pax Romana dream of a Supreme Magistrate, "invested," in Edward Gibbon's phrase, "with the sublime perfections of an Eternal Parent, and an Omnipotent Monarch."

On the podium of the General Assembly the dignities talked mostly about political economy, about "bridging the gulf" (also "narrowing the distance," and "breaking down the walls") between the nations of the rich and the nations of the poor, but no matter how different the geographical perspective or the ideological inflection—Fidel Castro denouncing the "abusive and unfair order" imposed by the "hegemonic superpower" on its Third World serfs and vassals; President Clinton suggesting that because [illegible] countries, everyone has a role to play"—all present endorsed the belief in a predictable future subject to corporate purchase, technological advance, and government decree. With enough money and a medium of goodwill, surely the obstacles could be overcome, a more equitable division of the world's wealth arranged by well-meaning technical advisers (prize-winning physicists, eminent scholars, handsome anchorpersons, etc.), the wilderness of contingent and random event domesticated with decisions by committee.

It wasn't only the front-page news that mocked the presumptions of omnipotence—civil war in Colombia and Sierra Leone, famine in the [illegible], a mob armed with machetes murdering three U.N. officials in West Timor (on the same day that Kofi Annan was raising his glass of congratulatory champagne), civil war in Chechnya and Sri Lanka, floods in India and six men arrested for cannibalism in Tanzania. Elusive messages elsewhere in the [illegible] mocking [illegible] indifferent to the [illegible] open water at the North Pole, 11 million lobsters dead in Long Island [illegible] colony of Arc[illegible] miles long, *Caulerpa taxifolia*, a tropical algae bright green in color and apparently escaped from the [illegible] in Monaco, inexorably [illegible] the plants on the floor of the Mediterranean Sea; severe drought in Texas, an unusual number of forest fires in Montana, in Colorado an inexplicable proliferation of bears.

consequences of rising sea levels for

that a slight, seemingly insignificant,

sult at a famous crossroads of military

or under the desks of the World Bank

province of submissive colonies
"well supplied with luxuries and ac-
the emperor's legions had not lost
the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest in
Britannia crammed to the ramparts
with spears and drinking songs), the course of
European history over the next
1,900 years might have taken a very
different turn. If the Roman
Empire received from him, Christ
dying intestate on an unremembered
cross, the non-appearance of the
English language, neither the need
nor the occasion for a Protestant re-
formation, Frederick the Great a cer-
tain Count Kaiser Wilhelm served by
an infatuation with stamps and wa-
ter beetles instead of a passion for
cavalry boots, Adolf Hitler, an
obscure painter of harm-
less watercolors.

A similarly speculative spirit in-
forms Hazel Henderson's book *The Natural*
Economy, which correlates the
butterfly effect to the wealth and
poverty of nations, and which, not by
coincidence, happened to be reading
during the week when the chemistries
were in town. In addresses to
the Organization of the Earth Summit
that were being focused at the Gen-
eral Assembly, and she directs her ar-
gument to the unenumerated, both
people inside the
and
institutions ranging from the Inter-

Oh, the last day, at the sum
meetings, Robert Mugabe, the dic
tor-president of Zimbabwe, secon
the motion in stronger language,
resentments implicit in the rhet
suggesting that the road to wa
Louis Blanc or Burton Hubley d
scribed as "a better future in Afr
are not likely to be paved with
per protocols.

> In the new Millennium life, the hu
> mans in need of legislation, super
> computers doing the calculation,
> new technological wonders remain
> age of the master race, the master c
> envy and the master race often h
> afraid we in developing countries
> have to stand up as another ppl
> ple and say, "Not again."

Principles unsupported by the
ergies of a sustainable econo
stand only at the whim of somel
else's politics or money, and Jac
would have us learn to imitate
production methods found in
ture. Like all other living org
isms—football teams, estuaries,
surance companies, glial
phagocytic cells—economies ex
in the state of constant self-cor
tion, adjusting to circumstances,
venting the future with instrume
for which nobody ever thought
place an order with General Elect
or The Walt Disney Company.
cobs draws the analogy betwee
prolific rain forest and a prosper
city—two applications of the sa
principle, two compositions
"self-organized ensemble," two va
tions, both impromptu, on t
themes of unintended consequenc
Understand the economy of the f
est, and you understand the ecol
of the city, or, vice versa and equa
instructive, recognize the city
natural habitat, and you discov
the forest as sophisticated artifa
Men assemble automobiles, a
beavers build dams, the constru
tions owe their existence to, and
come extensions of, a living orga
ism. Bees inhabit a world of the
own manufacture; so do subscrib
to the Internet. The projects of h
man technology exist wholly with
nature, evolving, like anthills, fro
a set of circumstances that they c
neither invent nor transcend.

obs marvels at the abundant
ts of ingenuity displayed by
y birds as well as metallurgists,
she wonders whether it might
se possible to build economic
anisms as benignly biodegrad-
as the walls of Troy or the
es of Vlad the Impaler. "An
me manufactures first-rate ce-
es at life-friendly temperatures
ite its ignorance of chemistry
lack of a diploma from MIT.
then do the friends of the free
ket — clever with their hands,
in laboratories, more widely
ded than most abalones — not
kewise?

he questions didn't show up in
briefing books at the Millennium
mit. Not only do they cast
t on the habits of thought in-
t by imperial economic planning
, that the future is stable, uni-
, and for sale) but they also in-
the majesty of science and dis-
e with the presumption that we
anticipate events, eliminate un-
ainty, reconfigure the accidents
mate and geography. About the
of political economy we have
e to learn from bakers, archi-
s, and horticulturists than from
kers and finance ministers, but
hoose to believe that we inhabit
rtual reality somewhere at a safe
nce from the vagaries of nature,
by making an excessive number
elf-important distinctions be-
n what is natural and what is ar-
ial, we invest our technologies
the powers that the old Romans
ned to gods — either the sublime
ection of an Eternal Parent or
deadly purpose of alien automa-
destroying the happiness of daf-
ls and unborn trout.

oth forms of worship diminish the
e of our initiative and creativity.
bs makes the point with a story
it the Alabama hairdresser and
11 million gallons of oil spilled by
Exxon Valdez in Alaska's Prince
iam Sound. The company spent
illion over a period of four years
ecover only 12 percent of the
ng oil; the hairdresser saw a pho-
aph of a dying otter, thought
it its saturated fur, and began ex-
menting with bundles of hair clip-
s that he swept from the floor of
his salon, soaked with motor oil and
floated in his son's wading pool.
Eventually he found a method that in
seven days would have cleaned up the
whole of the *Valdez* spill with the
sweepings of 200,000 American
barbershops done up in
mesh pillows.

Add to the degrees of uncertainty the unfathomable ecosystems of the human brain — multiplying at the rate of organelles and the *Anopheles* mosquito, capable of bringing forth the cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach or the chimneys at Dachau, and the numbers in the equations speak to the expansion of what the essayist Loren Eiseley once called "The Unexpected Universe," flickering unseen behind every whirl of our machines and every pronouncement of political or economic policy. Contingency has escaped into human hands, the emergent energies in the realm of mind as prolific and unstable as those in the kingdom of matter, but the gigantic organism that we now call the global economy stumbles into the future on a road marked only with the signposts of corporate purchase and technological advance. Flattered by a news and entertainment media that comforts us with proofs of our omnipotence (strong applause, complacent nods), we close the curtains against the invisible and procreant void and play with the maquettes of Rome reborn. We invest $50 billion in a missile defense system made entirely of metaphors, erect statues of the American Express card, bless our children in the baptismal font of the Internet.

We might as well be sacrificing goats on the altars of Poseidon, but so devout is our faith in "killer aps" that we omit the ritual gestures of humility. Roman generals returning from victories in Illyricum or Cisalpine Gaul approached the Forum in the company of a centurion standing behind them in the chariot to remind them of their mortality; Elizabethan merchants drawing up contracts for the delivery of French cannon or Spanish wine hedged their signatures with the phrase "S" the mutability of Fortune and Favor." The staff officers at the U.N. pour champagne ■











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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of Americans, aside from Wen Ho Lee, who have ever been prosecuted under the 1948 Atomic Energy [illegible] : 1

Number of Los Alamos documents Lee was accused of downloading that were classified by the time he did so : 0

Ways by which a Texan's prison sentence for candy bar theft this year exceeded his sentence for manslaughter, committed in 1977 : 2

Number of families in a Texas town who have sued the school district over its use of pesticides to control fire ants : 1

Points by which the average SAT score of a home-schooled student exceeds that of other U.S. students : 51

Percentage of U.S. public school teachers who hold a second job : 50

Factor by which the Dow Jones Industrial Average increased between 1900 and 1998 : 200

Factor by which the annual number of cosmetic surgeries performed in the United States increased during that time : 2

Percentage change since last May in the number of injuries caused by foot-powered scooters in the United States : +7

Percentage of Americans killed by faulty auto parts in the 1990's who were killed by Firestone tires : 1

Average annual number of traffic accidents in Iowa caused by low visibility due to corn stalks : 65

Inches by which Iowa's tallest corn stalks exceed the average height of an adult Asian elephant : 17

Number of people killed by captive elephants in the United States since 1984 : 17

Number of bears bred for their bile at China's 247 licensed bear farms in 1998 : 6,764

Rank of the China National Petroleum Corporation among companies with the largest stake in the Sudanese oil industry : 1

Ratio of the average cost of a gallon of gas in Britain last September to that of a gallon of Starbucks coffee : 1:4

Number of Russians electrocuted last year while trying to steal power lines and cable : 544

Number of former Soviet republics whose per capita GDP was higher in 1997 than in 1990 : 7

Percentage change in the per capita GDP of Latin America between 1980 and 1989 : +7.3

Percentage change since then : +9

Percentage change since 1979 in the number of cocaine users in the United States : −72

Chances that a Florida smoker lives in a household where smoking is prohibited : 2 in 5

Amount Anheuser-Busch contributed to support of the St. Louis presidential debate that year : $500,000

Minimum number of chromosomal regions proposed as sites for the tendency to work hard : 6

Year in which anxiety eclipsed depression among the most common mental health problems of the United States : 1998

Percentage change in per capita U.S. sugar consumption since 1982 : +23

Percentage change since 1990 in the number of adult Americans with diabetes : +33

Amount the Centers for Disease Control has spent redecorating restrooms to encourage employees to wash their hands : $12

Chance that a U.S. teenage boy has clogged coronary arteries : 1 in 31

Number of the six formerly inert elements whose inertness Finnish scientists have managed to overcome : 5

Percentage of Americans who report being "regularly bored at work" : 25

Number of words for boredom in the Mohegan language, according to a study by the Mohegan [illegible] : 1

Number of Mohegan words that are variants of "wampum," meaning "sacred valuable" : 3

Estimated number of hours of labor performed by African Americans, lives between 1619 and 1865 : 2

Estimated value of that labor, compounded at 6 percent interest through 1993 : $97,100,000,000,000

Number of felons enlisted from an Ohio halfway house last July as extras in the Cincinnati Opera's production of *Aida* : 21

Number of Native Americans sought by a Pilgrim descendants' group this year to [illegible] : 0

Price of a repopulating turkey decoy, designed to flush fowl mating [illegible] : $49.99

Hours after an Australian fisherman tells a reporter in August that his [illegible] : 24

Harper's Magazine

Never Read Another Dud



"The fine young critics in *The Salon.com Reader's Guide* filet their subjects with finesse and wit."
—***Vanity Fair***

"Dish with a side of sass."
—***USA Today***

"Very opinionated and very funny."
—**David Kipen, *San Francisco Chronicle***

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READINGS

[Essay]

IT'S NOT LIKE FALLING ASLEEP

By Robert Murray, a death-row inmate in Arizona's Eyman Complex. In 1991, Murray and his brother Roger entered a home in Grasshopper Junction, Arizona, and forced Dean Morrison and Jackie Appelhans to lie side by side on the floor. After shooting them at least six times with two pistols, the brothers shot each victim in the head with a shotgun. Both brothers were sentenced to death in 1992 for two counts of first degree murder.

The idea of death and dying is never far from my mind. Before coming to death row, I hadn't given much thought to my own demise. I've come very close to death a couple of times, but they were mere moments.

Now not only does the state of Arizona intend to kill me; they want me to participate in the process by deciding the method they will use. It's a strange form of polite behavior. For years, state officials have determined every aspect of my existence. Now, in a sudden burst of good manners, they want to add a bit of civility to my death by offering me a choice.

They've given me two methods to consider: lethal injection and lethal gas. I often imagine myself in the gas chamber and try to guess at the difference between dying there and dying by lethal injection. But I just keep coming back to the outcome. I wanted to ask someone's advice about which method I should choose, but dead is dead, and the handful of people I might have consulted are testaments to this finality.

Lethal injection is now paraded about as the easy way to die. Most of the public is under the impression that since lethal injection seems simple and painless it somehow makes killing more acceptable. Witnesses to injection executions come away with the illusory perception that a patient has fallen asleep. Typical witness testimony goes something like this:

"Well, he just seemed to fall asleep."

"Could you better describe the event?"

"We were standing there, and suddenly the curtain opened and there he was, just lying there."

"What happened next?"

"Well, like I said, he was just lying there looking at the ceiling. His lips were moving a little, and he . . . well, you know, he just closed his eyes and went to sleep. I wish [illegible] to be so easy and fast. He just went to sleep."

Easy as going to sleep. I have thought about this for literally hundreds of hours. I [illegible] asleep. I guess everybody wants to die as easily as they fall [illegible].

The state of Arizona has given me a description of the two methods of execution from which I am allowed to [illegible].

One [illegible] the gas chamber. The [illegible] I will be strapped [illegible] and [illegible] I will be [illegible] and [illegible] I never pulled and [illegible] my body [illegible] the [illegible] breathing the

people by coming up with a new way to kill people. Lethal injection was their new champion, and champion it they did.

Seven months after Harding's execution, a new law was born. "Any person sentenced to death prior to November 23, 1992, is afforded a choice of execution by either lethal gas or lethal injection. Inmates receiving death after November 23, 1992, are to be executed by lethal injection."

As it happened, my brother Roger and I were sentenced to death on October 26, 1992. We were among the lucky few who were given a Hobson's choice about how we should die.

Offering prisoners a "humane" execution seems to be the latest strategy to keep capital punishment alive. But the notion that any execution could be humane eludes me. People today seem generally happy with the idea of lethal injection, as long as it is done in a neat, sanitary, easy-to-watch fashion. I'm not sure what this says about our society. However, I am sure most people don't grasp the reality of the "sleeping" death of which they so widely approve. Indeed, many witnesses leave an execution with a serene look on their faces, as if they'd just seen a somewhat pleasant movie. To my mind, it's actually the witnesses who are falling asleep at injection killings, lulled by the calmness of it all.

As I see it, death by injection is very like being tossed out of an airplane. Suppose I'm told that on November 3, someone will escort me from my cell, take me up in an airplane, and, at three o'clock in the afternoon, toss me out without a parachute. After a few minutes, my body will hit a target area, killing me immediately. It's an easy, instant, painless death. The impact of hitting the ground after falling several thousand feet will kill me as instantly and effectively as lethal injection.

Killing inmates by tossing them out of airplanes would, of course, be unacceptable to the public. But why? It's as fast and effective as lethal injection. The terror of falling two minutes isn't all that different from the terror of lying strapped to a table, and neither is physically painful. There's a similar waiting process for each execution. If an airplane is used, you wait for the time it takes the aircraft to take off and reach the target area at the proper altitude. For lethal injection, you wait in the death house until everything's ready and all appeals by your execution has been exhausted. In an airplane, a cargo door is opened; in the death house, a curtain across the viewing window is drawn back. In an airplane, you anticipate your destiny; death and witnesses watch your body fall. In the death house, you



"Nesting Colony, Bourgogne, 1992," by Michael Kenna, is on exhibit at an exhibition at the Bickell Museum [illegible]

are strapped to a gurney and witnesses watch state officials inject you with sodium pentothal. In both cases, death is sudden and final.

To me they are the same. I will feel the same powerful emotions and chaotic anxiety either way. But the public would never describe my death by falling from an aircraft as "simply falling asleep." They would be outraged. Politicians would rush to give speeches about giving prisoners a "choice," and the law would be changed.

The public would cry out, not because the prisoner died an agonizing and painful death but because most people feel that the anxiety of being tossed from an aircraft without a parachute would be too terrible for an inmate to bear, and the spectacle of death would be too terrible for observers to bear. In this case, the public would be forced to understand the emotions an inmate feels before execution; when lethal injection [illegible] hidden behind [illegible] until the moment [illegible].

This [illegible] I've come to [illegible] the [illegible] execution. There is much more to death by injection than just falling asleep. Consumed with the long wait on death row (where execution is a constant presence), the terror of being taken to the [illegible], the helpless panic of being strapped [illegible] and finally the sense of time [illegible] the curtain opened. All of the fear and anxiety of falling from an aircraft is present when the injection begins. Both are horrible by any measure. And neither is anything like falling asleep.

ON GORE AND NOTHINGNESS

...tation of the Very Possibility of
...
...
...
Harper's Magazine

The ... Does Al ... approach that question from a philosophical perspective, I'm sure you remember. Martin Heidegger, who wrote, in *Being and Time*, that: "The nothing nothings" (or "nothingness nihilates"). Consider, as a ... prominent speech by Al Gore. He ... and he is not saying anything; he is nothing and he is saying nothing. ... vacuum that ... the essence of nothingness. Nothingness nihilates.

... perhaps ... public persona. ... authentic revelation. As he ... but more, ... nothing ... pal ... Nothingness nihilates.

... Gore ... Gore ... Gore


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JAGUAR
THE ART of PERFORMANCE

[Essay]

DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME

groups, compiled by the Backyard Wrestling Link.

Al Bundy Wrestling
Ass Whompin' Federation
Backyard Brawlers Association
Brutally Hardcore in the Backyard
Crazy Badass Wrestling
Extreme Backyard/Basement Wrestling
Extreme Pothead Federation
Extreme Psychotic Wrestling
Extremely Extreme Wrestling
Redneck Wrestling Alliance

[Essay]

WHAT ITCHY AND SCRATCHY KNOW

by Comics *that appeared on* Mojo Wire, *the website of* Mother Jones *magazine. Last June* Jones *is a writer of comics, cartoons, and screenplays, including* Batman, Spider-Man, Ultraforce, *and the* Pokémon *newspaper comic strip.*

At thirteen I was alone and afraid. Taught by my well-meaning, progressive English-teacher parents that violence was wrong, that rage was something to be overcome, and that cooperation was always better than conflict, I suffocated my deepest fears and desires under a nice boy persona. Afraid to join my peers in their bumptious rush into adolescent boyhood, I withdrew into passivity and loneliness. My parents, not trusting the violent world of the late 1960s, built a wall between me and the crudest elements of American pop culture. Then the Incredible Hulk smashed through it.

One of my mother's students convinced her that Marvel Comics, despite their apparent juvenility and violence, were in fact devoted to lofty messages of pacifism and tolerance. My mother borrowed some, thinking they'd be good for me. And so they were. But not because they preached lofty messages of benevolence. They were good for me because they were juvenile. And violent.

The character who caught me, and freed me, was the Hulk: overgendered and undersocialized, half-naked and half-witted, raging against a frightened world that misunderstood and persecuted him. Suddenly I had a fantasy self to carry my stifled rage and buried desire for power. I had a fantasy self who was unafraid of his desires and the world's disapproval, unhesitating and effective in action. "Puny boy, follow Hulk!" roared my fantasy self, and I followed.

I followed him to new friends—other sensitive geeks chasing their own inner brutes—and I followed him to the arrogant, self-exposing, superheroic decision to become a writer.

Eventually I left him behind, but in my thirties I found myself writing action movies and [illegible]. I wrote some Hulk stories and met the geek-geniuses who created him. I saw my own creations turned into action figures, cartoons, and computer games. I talked to the [illegible] fans. Across generations, [illegible] it was always the same [illegible] pulling themselves out of emotional traps by immersing themselves in violent



Toy Pistols, W. Maxwell Prince, 1999. Courtesy of the artist and Deitch Projects, New York.

stories, people integrating the scariest stories fervently feared fragments of themselves into fuller senses of selfhood than the ego fantasies of superhuman comfort and destruction.

I have watched boys fashioning their own story monsters, transforming themselves into dinosaur to embolden himself for the plunge into preschool, a Power Ranger to muscle through a social competition in kindergarten. In the first grade, his friends started climbing a tree at school. But he was afraid: of falling, of the complex crawling up the trunk, of being branches. His friends' derision. I took him out from his own fantasies and read him old Tarzan comics, and he made spears and Indian-style knives. For two weeks he lived in them. Then he put them aside. And he climbed the tree.

But all the while, especially in the wake of the recent horrific school shootings, I heard pop psychologists insisting that violent stories are harmful to kids. I heard preschool teachers begging parents to keep their kids away from "junk culture." I heard guilt-stricken friends with sons who loved Pokémon lament, "I've turned into the kind of mom who lets her kid watch violent videos."

Such fears are misguided.

I've found that even the most disposable, trashiest pop-culture story can have its own developmental function. Pretending to have superhuman powers helps children conquer the feelings of powerlessness that inevitably come with being [illegible] stories help kids negotiate [illegible] work through the early stages of socialization. Identification with a rebellious, even destructive, hero helps children learn to push back [illegible] and teaches dependency.

[illegible] bloody video games, playground karate, toy [illegible]

it against life's challenges.

Certainly violent entertainment has helped

that it's helped

hurt, and

violence" isn't well

and that

more

through our

present our children

but

to grow up to

themselves, too easily manipulated.

We send the message to our children in a hundred ways that their craving for imaginary

wrongs, real

When we don't call for

or forbid Mortal Kombat, we moan to other parents within our kids' earshot about

in the entertainment they

We

their

to play

fight, or we steer them from some monstrous

In even the most progressive households, where we make such a point of letting children feel what they feel, we rush to substitute an enlightened discussion for the raw material of ragefu fantasy. In the process, we risk confusing them about their natural aggression in the same way the

their

We want to protect children

We should

ter them not against violence but against pow-

CITIZEN BEREZOVSKY

Gusinsky, another of the oligarchs, on embezzle-

to Mayor Moscow.

Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich,

Last week a high official of your administration presented me with an ultimatum: transfer my stake in ORT to the state within two weeks or follow in the footsteps of Gusinsky—meaning, I presume, the Butyrka prison. I assume that the reason for such an offer is your displeasure with the ORT coverage of the Kursk submarine accident. "The president wants to run ORT himself," your representative told me.

ORT is currently the only national channel that does not depend entirely on the authorities. If I accept this ultimatum, there will be no real information on Russian television, only propaganda controlled by your advisers.

I admit that the media subjected you to sharp criticism in their coverage of Kursk, which was also, in my view, quite fair. Your desire to control the media is understandable: if, God forbid, something similar were to happen again, there would be no one to criticize you. Without independent media, it would be easier for you to rule, and there would be far fewer people asking unpleasant questions. You wouldn't have had to cut your vacation short to raise money for the families of the Kursk victims.

For all Russia's shortcomings and problems, there are several indisputable achievements, the most important being the fact that millions of people are no longer afraid of the government, because the government has been forced, to some extent, to answer to the people. This has become possible above all thanks to the independent media. For the first time in decades people have recourse against the militiaman, the bureaucrat, and the boss. By putting the media under the control of the administration, the old fears will return. And there will be no one to complain to.

By presenting me with this ultimatum, you have put an important question to society: do non-state media have the right to exist in Russia? And you have answered that question with

relatives of the Kursk crew

They must be lying. There are people on television who shout more loudly than anyone and who have destroyed this very army and navy. Today they are in the front ranks of the defenders, and again they are doing it in order to discredit and destroy the army

They stole it, but it money and

now buying up everyone and everything. And they have made laws to match."

private capital,

even if it is selfish and willful, does not start wars and does not hide casualties, it did not hush up Chernobyl, it does not deport people or liquidate class enemies. The authorities have many ways of controlling private capital, but Russian society has only one method of restricting government: independent media.

A famous American journalist, H. L. Mencken, once said, "For every problem there is one solution which is simple, neat, and wrong." To put it the Russian way, "If there is a person there is a problem, if there is no person there are no problems." Threats and blackmail are not permissible tools for a government to use in resolving disputes with citizens. They signal weakness, incompetence, and therefore danger for the whole society. You know me fairly well, and, unlike your advisers, you will not be too surprised to learn that I will not bow to diktat.

I urge you, Mr. President, to stop before it is too late. Do not let the genie of unlimited power out of the bottle. It will destroy both the nation and you.

Yours sincerely,
B. Berezovsky

[Transcript]

DOPE FIENDS

From a 1996 conversation between Clinton crony Barry R. McCaffrey and A. M. Rosenthal, then a New York Times *columnist, just after California and Arizona passed referendums legalizing the medical use of marijuana. A tape recording of this conversation was an exhibit in the matter of* Dr. Marcus Conant, et al. *v.* Barry R. McCaffrey, et al., *a lawsuit that sought to block the government's stated intention to prosecute doctors who discussed with patients marijuana's potential benefits; on September 7, a federal judge ruled that such prosecutions would violate the First Amendment. According to this tape, McCaffrey urged recorded telephone conversations with journalists, often without their knowledge, to ensure that he was not misquoted.*

A. M. ROSENTHAL: I'm calling because I know you have been watching this thing in California and Arizona as carefully as I should have, but, ah, it's really terribly worrisome. Maybe I'm overdoing it in my head, but—

BARRY R. MCCAFFREY: I think not.

ROSENTHAL: Okay. Let me ask you one or two things. We can speak on any basis you want.

MCCAFFREY: On the record.

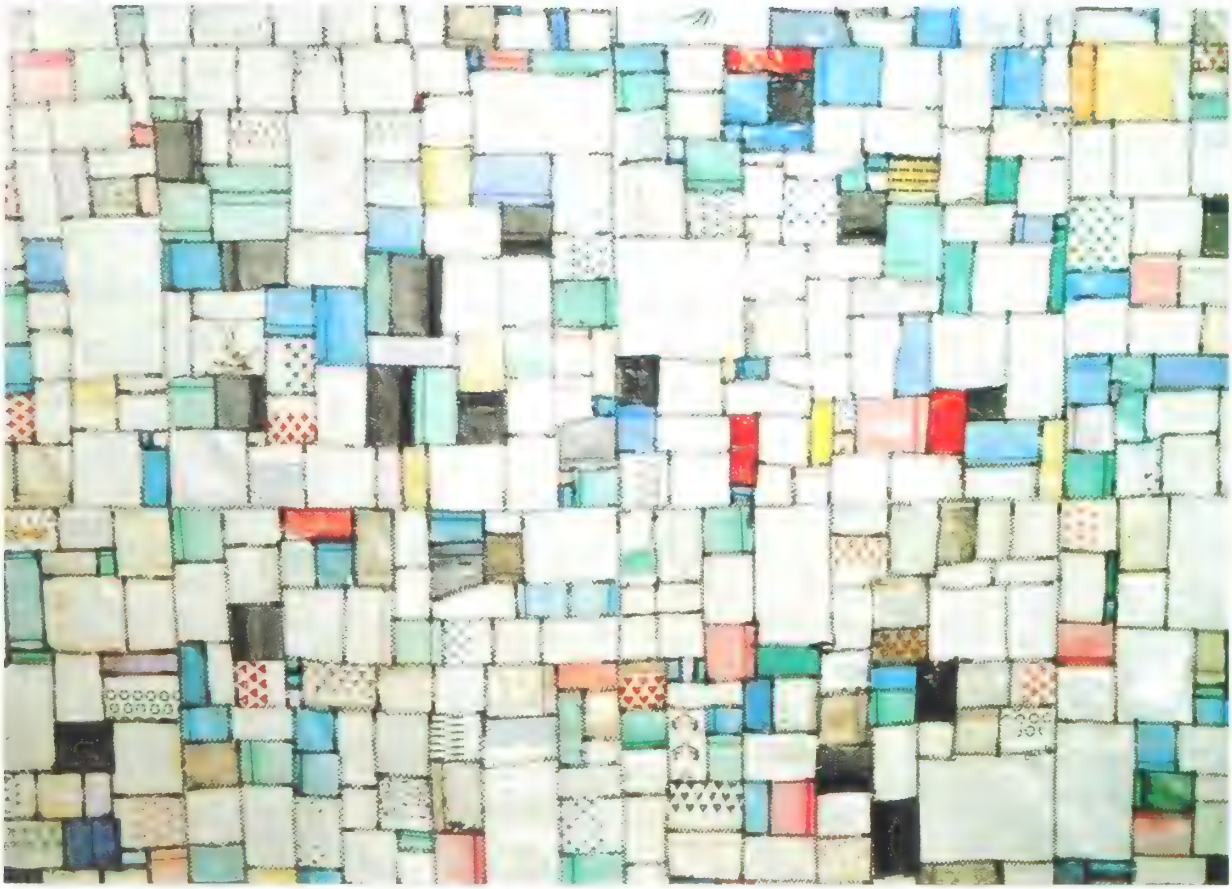
[illegible] Yeah, because I really [illegible] body, I need a little help. I want to [illegible] opposition to this. Where do we [illegible] now? How would you describe this legislation in terms of impact on the drug war and [illegible]? I don't want to put words in your mouth, but I'm trying to write a column in which I want to say that this thing has been done while the rest of us, too many of us, not including you, were asleep. That it shows every sign that in the next two years they will get ready to put this proposition on other ballots. And, uh, where do we go from here? First of all, what do we do about these, what happened in

[Accomplishments]

I ❤ MALAYSIA

From The Malaysia Book of Records, *with an introduction by Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad. According to Mr. Mohamad, the book reflects "the true spirit of all Malaysians" as they "strive towards a developed nation status."*

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Fast Circumcision Device
Longest Mandarin Album Title
Largest Satay Combo
Largest Porridge Cooking Event
Longest Abbreviation
First Luminous Bowling Center
Longest Nonstop Whistling
Largest Paper Bag Collection
Highest Stunt Climbed on Clenched Teeth
Fastest Rubber-Stamp Machine
Largest Gathering of Older Persons in a [illegible]
Biggest Gathering of the Smallest Cars in a Country
Most Rats and Cockroaches in a Laboratory
Biggest Fly Trap
Largest Mock Soccer Ball
Heaviest Poster
Largest Eraser Collection
Highest Car Lifted [illegible] by a Human Jackscrew



ments, and Clinton obviously empowered all
the referendums but did refer to medical use
through this before, federal law and federal
and Arizona, but unfortunately, at that
there was a lot of money, millions of dollars,
pushing a referendum from out-of-state indi-
viduals, and not many of them. I think it

ROSENTHAL: And who were they?

MCCAFFREY: It's George Soros. It's a guy named Sterling, there's—Rockefeller was one of them.

ROSENTHAL: Which one?

MCCAFFREY: Golly, I can't keep them straight.

ROSENTHAL: The other day I wrote something, I mentioned Soros—this guy is really gonna cause us—is causing trouble in this. He does all these things. He is supporting the pro-drug foundations.

MCCAFFREY: I agree absolutely.

ROSENTHAL: All over the country.

MCCAFFREY: He's at the heart and soul of a lot of this. It's alleged he spent 15 million bucks plus—

ROSENTHAL: The heart and soul of what, the initiatives?

MCCAFFREY: Yeah, this is—We're now going to see this come up all over the country. And this is not paranoia on my part, this is a national legalization-of-drugs strategy. It's not paranoia on my part. In other words, I see this not as two medical initiatives dealing with the terminally ill, I see this as part of a national effort to legalize drugs, starting with marijuana, all over the United States.

ROSENTHAL: So do I.

MCCAFFREY: I think that's what's at stake in these two cases. It was absolutely cunning. It's worth a graduate school paper to examine how they did it. They did polling, they determined what initiatives will work with the people, the voters in those states. The one in Arizona was even more byzantine than the one in California. California is a little bit Cheech and Chong, but the one in Arizona, it's unreal that initiative.

ROSENTHAL: Let me jump in for a little bit. You say the federal laws against the growing and use or possession of these things—marijuana—will still stand. Now what is it according to the proposition? As I gather, it is California law now that you can do it. Do they have to pass a specific law? I think this does it.

MCCAFFREY: Well, first of all, the jury is out. But I think what's going to happen in California is if you're growing, if you're sitting out in the middle of the national forest growing a hundred pot plants that are worth 10,000 bucks apiece, you're still gonna get arrested, and then you're gonna have to try and demonstrate that you were not in violation of existing California law and that you're covered in some way by this new initiative.

ROSENTHAL: You said the national park, but suppose someone is growing it in his back yard?

MCCAFFREY: Well, how about the balcony in an apartment building overlooking Los Angeles airport, 'cause you're gonna see that in all—another three weeks too.

ROSENTHAL: No question about it. They—victory on their hands—and they're—it. Of course they may decide to [illegible] key and—

MCCAFFREY: Well, Abe, the other thing I'd suggest to you, though, is to estimate doctors—are not going to be using this. Some of them will be if they think there's money in it, but—

ROSENTHAL: But, Barry, in California, you don't need a prescription, a written prescription.

MCCAFFREY: You need a doctor to recommend it. And so initially, are you going to go to a cancer doctor as a fourteen-year-old and get him to recommend marijuana? I think 85 percent of the people in California aren't going to smoke dope and aren't going to allow their kids to do it. And physicians aren't going to recommend it. I mean, it's just—it's counterintuitive to think that some intelligent woman or man who is a physician and trained in the healing arts is going to recommend smoking pot.

ROSENTHAL: Well, you're right, but—

MCCAFFREY: But some people are, and the real question is what are we going to do about them, and the answer is we don't know but for sure we're not getting rolled on this issue because this isn't medicine, this isn't science, this is legalization of drugs, and we think kids are at risk.

ROSENTHAL: Well, we got caught off base in California.

MCCAFFREY: Yes sir. Absolutely we did.

ROSENTHAL: And I think the best thing we can do is say we were caught off, those of us who were against it.

MCCAFFREY: I agree.

ROSENTHAL: And pull ourselves together.

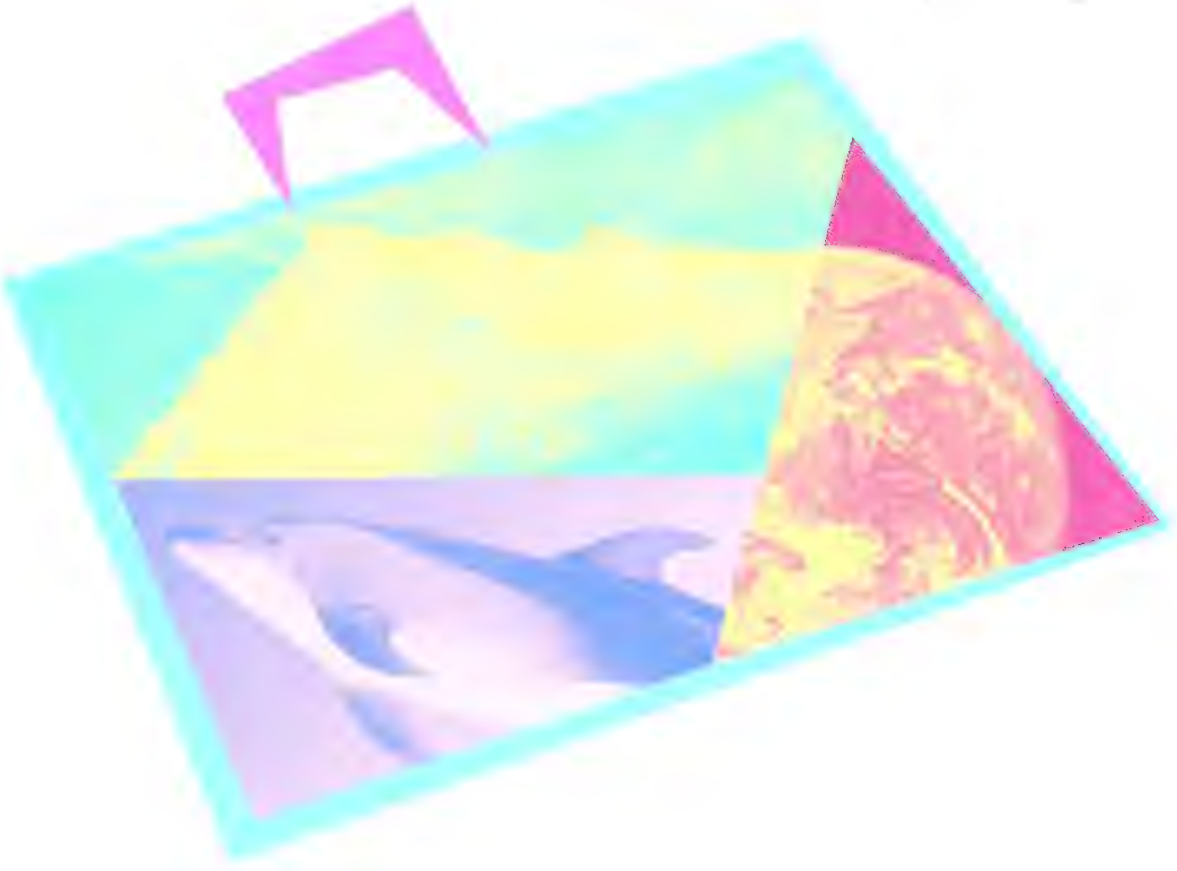
MCCAFFREY: I agree. Abe, I've come to determine in life not getting killed in combat because I pay attention to details. And you do what you're supposed to be, and particularly you don't get caught off guard. We don't want to go back to [illegible] 25 million Americans regularly using drugs, when we had a third of the armed forces using drugs and the NYPD using drugs and we had the faculty of universities using drugs.

ROSENTHAL: Are you talking about the seventies?

MCCAFFREY: Yeah. I—[illegible] the peak year of the—in America. And it didn't work out, and it left us with hundreds of thousands of people dead and billions of dollars—I [illegible] through this year, we lost [illegible] and [illegible] billion from the abuse of illegal drugs in America.

ROSENTHAL: And what we've got to do, I mean, not—but all of us, to convince people of

DOMO ARIGATO, MR. ROBOTO



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AOLIZA: what would you do if richard has any goo dive sites up there?
FIVE: go diving what else for lobster
AOLIZA: does talking about this bother you?
FIVE: i: mine do just asking if richard can tell me
AOLIZA: does talking about this bother you?
FIVE: what do you think?
AOLIZA: does talking about this bother you?
FIVE: no it doesnt iam over her
AOLIZA: why 'no'?
FIVE: because it doesnt what we had is over she didnt want me didnt love me wasnt her type after 7 or 8 months and thats all i gave her everything and she shit on me so end of story move on to next chapter
AOLIZA: are you angry?
FIVE: i was but not anymore i tried to remain friends cause she said she wanted to and i did but asshole made her cut herself off from me, and hes the one thats changed her and is controlling her but so be it thats what she wants she got it
AOLIZA: perhaps i already know you were.
AOLIZA: does this make you feel unhappy?
FIVE: what does
AOLIZA: does that question interest you?
AOLIZA: does talking about this bother you?
FIVE: iam not looking for any answers already have all i need
AOLIZA: does talking about this bother you?

[Memoir]

WHAT DREAMS MAY COME

Fly in the Soup, a memoir by Charles Simic, published this month by the University of Michigan Press. Simic's most recent book of poems is Jackstraws.

In the days of my youth, I could get a good night's sleep on a hard floor without a cover. I'd stretch out on my back fully dressed, shut my eyes, and drift off immediately. That's how I slept in prison in Yugoslavia when I was ten years old. I still have a dim memory of the crowded floor of the cell, the men sleeping squeezed together and me awake sitting up in the milky light of the new day. I wore shorts when we were caught crossing the border. My legs were badly scratched from crawling through the thick woods at night. What gave my mother the courage to set out like that with two small boys and two strange men as guides into the dark? I'd like to ask her, but she's been dead for years. I imagine her rolling her eyes in exasperation. By the time she was eighty-nine, she was convinced that nothing that happened to her in her life made any sense. Bombs falling out of the blue sky, cities in smoke, corpses lying individually or in heaps everywhere you looked, and here I'm still asking for an explanation.

A dog will join you on the floor, even a cat, but rarely a human being. Monastic cells, solitary confinement, sleeping in the open, and sidewalks of big cities where homeless huddle come to mind. The hard surface is good for your spine, people tell you. I had my doubts.

A woman locked me out of her apartment once. Pissed, tired, and tipsy, I went to sleep right in front of her door using her doormat as a pillow. I woke hours later to catch sight of an old woman walking past me with her little dog, who gave me a look of understanding. Even passionate screwing on the floor has a way of coming to an abrupt end the instant you realize your knees or your back are killing you. That morning I rose quickly and hurried after the old woman and her dog.

There were periods in my life when I couldn't remember a single dream. I went around embarrassed, trying to imagine what dreaming would be like. At other times I found myself every night with a different cast of characters dressed like guests at a funeral. More freaks packed into one dream than in all the sideshows in the world. I acted in countless tragedies and porn flicks. The sets and the lighting were those of a 1920's German Expressionist movie. [illegible] many shadows where further danger might lurk. The sky in my dreams was always overcast. I was in some vaguely familiar city where, for some reason, I could not give my terrors a slip. Everyone must have walked on padded feet, because there was never any sound.

I would not be the same man if I had been able to sleep well in my life. It all started when I was twelve. I fell in love. I lay in the dark trying to imagine what was under her black skirt. I thought her name was Maria, but it was really Insomnia.

In a life full of troubles, Insomnia kept me company against the fear of the dark. We were like young lovers. I had no secrets from her. Our silences were as eloquent as our speech.

Most of the time, I resisted the impulse to toss and turn. I didn't blink. I tried not to swallow. I didn't even move my tongue. My mind was like Ulysses. We took long sea voyages. We were often in the South Seas and China. In nineteenth-century London and St. Petersburg we were afraid.

Mostly, though, we were calm. Like Noah's crow, we reconnoitered our galaxy. Acrobats of the abyss, face-to-face with the ineffable. We had conversations with old philosophers, mystics, and death-camp prisoners.

"I'm awake because I don't wish to be surprised by my future," said one. "There's freedom only for the awake," said another.

Horror of consciousness, everybody's favorite home movie.

[Poem]

NOT GUILTY

By Siegfried Sassoon. The poem, which was previously unpublished, appears in Siegfried Sassoon, *a biography by Max Egremont, published in London by Richard Cohen Books.*

Chief witness, the Unconscious. Psychic Science
Judge-Analyst supreme.
Indictment read. But technical reliance
On evidence of Dream

Not me. It's not—no—this dark denial
Of Daylight given grace.
I the accused, confronts your trial
With unconfessing face.

and malign over the spiky tree line, instantly sucking the dew from the leaves and burning it into the parched earth, and he judged it was prudent to locate the Dexycone. He sat with a leg extended over the open car door, sipping the last of his coffee. He glanced occasionally at his wrist as if he'd check the time though he wore no watch there. There was just a band of paler flesh, like the ghost of a watch. His watch resided in a cigar box with small change and trinkets beneath the bench in the pool hall where he'd pawned it for two six-packs of Falstaff beer, and he resolved that the first thing he was going to do when he got a paycheck was redeem the watch.

After a while he got out of the car with his lunchbox and seated himself on a pile of tree trunks a dozer had pushed into windrows. The blade-scarred trees were lush with honeysuckle vines and the air was heady with the scent of their blossoms. He opened the lunchbox and selected a sandwich and unwrapped it and took a bite. Occasionally he'd glance up the chatted road and cock his head attentively and listen but all he could hear was doves calling mournful as lost souls from some smoky hollow still locked in sleep.

He turned at a sudden whicker in the air and watched a hummingbird suck the drop of nectar from the throat of a honeysuckle. Curious creature, no bigger than his thumb. Its blurred wings, tiny sesame eyes. He stopped chewing and watched it. He studied it with a bemused intensity as if he'd learn its secrets. As if this might be a talent he ought to acquire. When he heard the first pickup truck he rewrapped the uneaten portion of his sandwich and restored it to the lunch box and listened to the clasps and stood up.

Dust rose and pulled near the unfinished structure and stopped and two men got out. Doors slammed. They stood studying the schoolhouse as if it could meet their specifications.

Bout time you all got here, Albright sang out. I'd about give you out.

They didn't even look at him. They'd seen him before. This was the third day he'd been present for the windrowed trees, drawing near like a vulture for somebody to bring one that should show up, he.

You reckon they'll be a hunt today.

You'd have to ask Woodall about that, one of the men said.

The other man lit a cigarette. He glanced at Albright through the smoke. It gets any hotter I'm not sure I can drive my rig.

I'd take it, Albright said.

The man looked at him. You wouldn't know what the temperature will be, he said.

Sang cool by a hundred in the shade and that's in the morning, Albright said.

Other workers arrived in beat-up trucks and

side

Story

CRIMPER

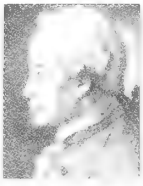
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parking lot

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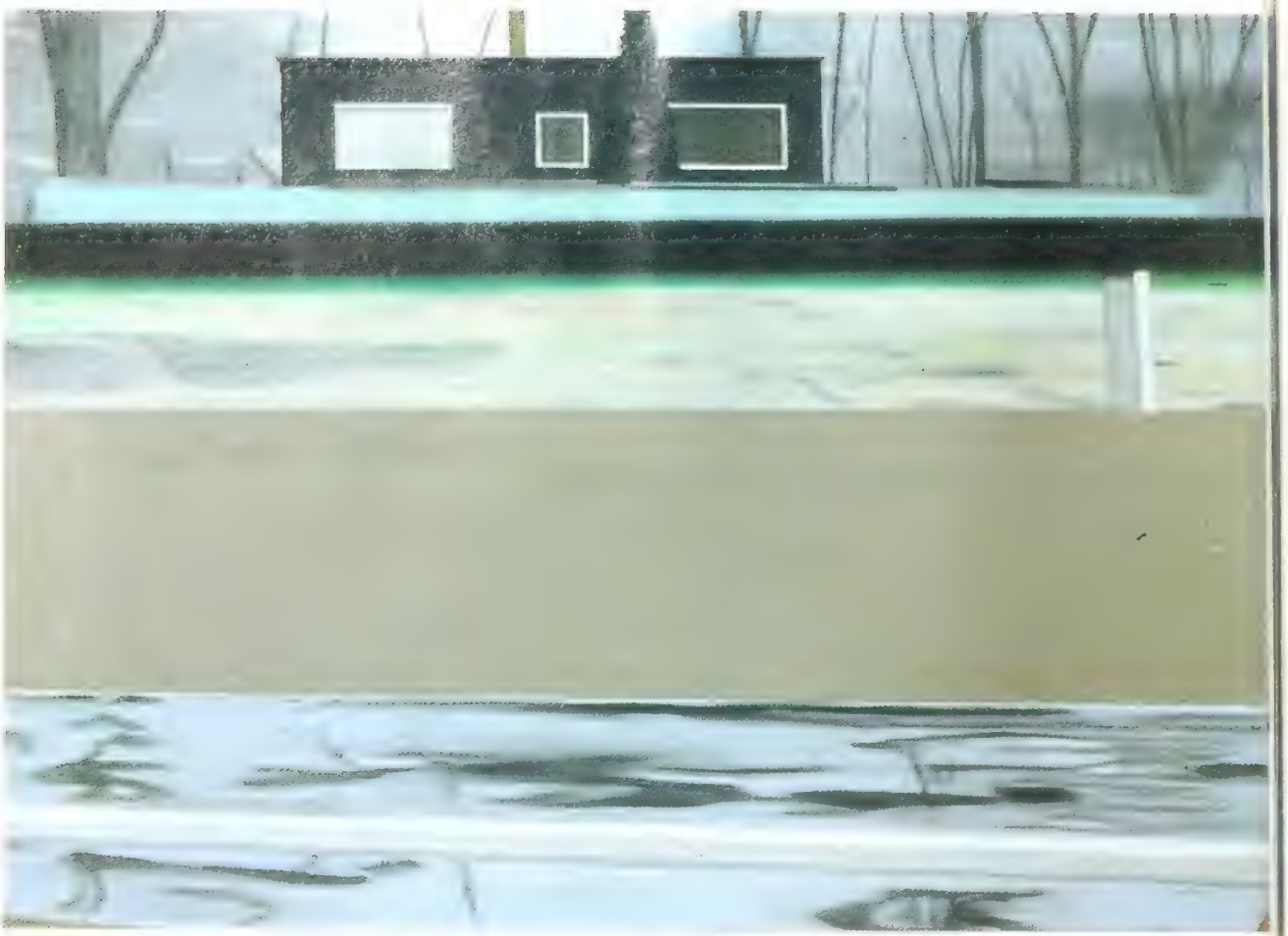
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than other men and Albright was never quite certain which eye was watching him.

There's not much to it for a fact, he finally said. I don't have anybody I can spare to put on it, so I'm going to have to give you a shot at it.

I won't let you down.

We'll get you a hardhat out of the trailer here. We'll have to fill out some papers anyway. This here is a government job and everything has to be wrote down five or six times.

He had ascended the steps and was unlocking the office door. Albright was glancing about to see was anybody watching him get hired. They went in. The air in the trailer was hot and stifling and Albright felt sweat break out instantly all over his body. Woodall set him to filling out forms and began rummaging through a wooden box of hardhats and rubber boots. He laid a blue hardhat upon the desk.

You have to wear this hardhat all the time you're on the work site.

Have you not got another white one like you got? Albright was licking the point of his pencil, studying Woodall's hat.

These blue hardhats are laborer's hats. This one I got is a superintendent's hat. It might be a little early in the day for one of them. I been here twenty years and I own the company.

Oh. Well. Blue's all right. One of them blue ones'd suit me just fine, I reckon.

Listen to me about this hat. You got to wear it all the time. This is a government job and the sons of bitches keep sending inspectors around trying to catch me fucking up. They catch a man working without a hat it'd be a hellatious fine on me and no telling what else. You got it?

Albright signed his name with a flourish. I got it, he said.

Let's get going then.

Woodall was already going down the steps, striding off toward the tall brick building. Hey, Albright called after him. Where's this crimper at?

Woodall turned. It's on the roof, where did you reckon it was at? Do you not know what we're talking about here?

Course I know. I just didn't know if it was already up there or if we'd have to carry it.

They stood before a ladder leading to the roof. Albright looked up. The sheer brick wall, the ladder telescoping into the nothingness of a hot brassy sky. He judged it forty or fifty feet.

That ladder sure is one long son of a bitch, he said.

It don't go but from the bottom to the top, Woodall pointed out. Let's be for going up it. Time's wasting and there's a world of metal waiting up there to be crimped.

Albright took a deep breath and squared his shoulders and laid a hand to each side of the ladder. He started up. The ladder swayed [illegible] and disquietingly with his progress. He could hear it grating against the brick parapet high above him. He could feel Woodall coming up behind him. Halfway up he stopped. His knuckles gripping the rung of the ladder were bloodless and white. His knees began to jerk spasmodically nor could he make them stop. The ladder began to shake.

Hey, Woodall called.

Albright didn't say anything. He was staring through a window opening into a room where men were hanging drywall. He was imagining what the solidlooking floor felt like beneath their feet.

This ladder's tied off up there. It's not going anywhere.

I was thinking more in the line of me going somewhere without it, Albright said. Is there not any other way up?

No there's not. We've not put the elevator in yet and the helicopter's out on some other job. Why didn't you tell me you were afraid of heights?

I didn't know. I ain't ever been on em before.

Just go up one step at a time and don't be looking down. Look at the wall.

Albright rested his face on his clenched knuckles. He closed his eyes. After a time he began to ascend again.

When he reached the top he stepped over the parapet onto an enormous expanse of metal roofing. The roof was enclosed front and sides by the brick wall capped with stone but open on the rear and Albright's feet sensed a slight pitch toward the open area. The roof felt solid and substantial beneath his feet when he stamped it tentatively and remnants of his normal cockiness began to accrue about him now that he was safe.

The crimper was a squat metal device built close to the floor with four short appendages each ending in a roller. There was a handle on its back not unlike a harness and to Albright it looked for all the world like a full-grown dachshund. To complete this illusion it was powered by an electrical cord wound about the handle like a leash.

This metal is all laid out and screwed to the lathing, Woodall said. It's not going anywhere. But where the joints are there are two L-shaped edges and this crimper just rides down the joint and crimps the longer edge over the short one. You see? That makes it watertight. Here, I'll show you.

Woodall hoisted the crimper and set it astride one of the seams. Albright watched. Woodall flipped a [illegible] switch and the crimper sprang to life and began a loud clacketyclack and commenced spalling it off along the crimped edge, its

Woodall paid out cord from the roll across his arm [illegible] and [illegible] back and [illegible] on the next seam facing and began crimping it. He cut the [illegible].

[illegible] You [illegible] then just paid it [illegible] back the other way. You don't need to shut her off unless [illegible] Watch [illegible] that [illegible] there's not [illegible] proper. Turn her two feet or so back from the edge. That's been hand crimped already to keep a man from having to lean out over the edge and turn the crimper. You [illegible].

Whose airplane is that? Albright asked.

What?

Albright was gazing over the brick parapet [illegible] In the distance [illegible] there. And the sun shot [illegible] like tiny ceramic cows from a knickknack shelf grazed placidly in the weight of the sun.

Whose airplane is that?

It's mine, Woodall said. Were you listening to [illegible] the crimper.

[illegible]

I had to fly all the way to North Carolina to get it. [illegible] I could [illegible].

Albright [illegible] Woodall [illegible] around and followed it back. Woodall nodded grudgingly. He laid a hand atop his head. Keep that hardhat on, he yelled above the din of [illegible] the ladder.

[illegible] leash. Easy money, he was thinking, making up [illegible] It [illegible] mirror it [illegible] the mirrorlike tin was blinding. Albright was wringing [illegible] out of his eyes with a shirt sleeve and when he [illegible] the landscape warped and ran like a landscape viewed [illegible] weightless he might go drifting aloft into the hot blue firmament and he divined that the only thing keeping him earthbound was the length of leash he kept paying out, reeling in, paying out.

[illegible]

said. I'd give a five-dollar bill for a good cold drink of water.

But there [illegible] and the thought of negotiating the ladder again seemed not to appeal to him. He looked about for shade. There wasn't any. He took off his shirt and folded it and laid it on the roof and laid the hardhat atop it. Fucker draws heat like iron draws lightning, he said. He [illegible] the water out of his spun gold curls and wiped his eyes again and took a pack of [illegible] out of his pocket but he'd sweated them through and he tossed them over the edge. He stood for a moment catching his breath. The air [illegible] seemed to sear his lungs. He turned the crimper back on.

He was crimping away when he heard someone yelling at him. He seemed to have been hearing it subliminally for some time and when he finally turned Woodall was standing on the roof screaming at him. Woodall pounded the top of his hardhat and pointed a finger at Albright's bare head until finally comprehending but momentarily confused Albright dropped the cord and went to get his hardhat.

The crimper crimped on toward the sloping edge of the roof. Albright positioned the blue hat on his head and whirled to chase the crimper. Woodall was shrieking at him soundlessly. The crimper was at the edge of the roof when Albright grasped the cord. There was too much slack and the crimper tilted over the edge like a diver and just went on crimping sheer air and vanished from sight. Come back, Albright cried. The cord grew taut in his hands then went slack. The clackety-clack fell silent and something slammed against the concrete far below and Albright could hear the [illegible] cries of the workers.

He raised a hand to calm Woodall, a placating hand of casual assurance, don't worry, just a minute, I'll go get it.

He made for the ladder. He went down it hand over hand without a thought for heights and dropped the last six or eight feet and was up immediately and [illegible] for the Dodge. He went past crimper parts and oddments of metal strewn [illegible] concrete and just where [illegible] about the remains of the crimper standing hands on knees peering down at it like soldiers gathered about a comrade fallen [illegible] the time he reached the Dodge [illegible] and ran with his left arm already extended to open the car door he wasn't even at yet and his right hand was fumbling out [illegible].

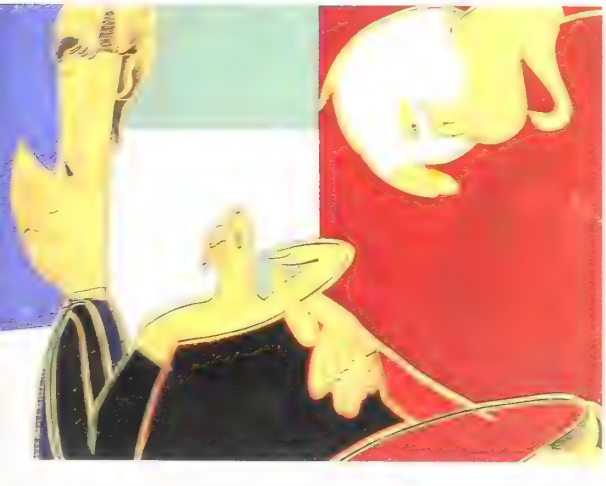
Inside he cranked the car and shifted and [illegible] with liquid motion and slewed spinning out of the gravel into the [illegible] with the speedometer [illegible] ready climb and a slipstream of pale dust [illegible].













THE HARPER'S INDEX BOOK

— VOLUME 3 —

Average number of dimples on a golf ball: 415

Chance that an American would rather be mugged than audited: 1 in 2

Gallons of chewing gum scraped up each year by the Statue of Liberty's maintenance crew: 3

That's just a sampling of the thousands of eyebrow-raising statistics in the third edition of *The Harper's Index Book*–an all-new collection of the best of Harper's Index, arguably the most original (and most imitated) invention in magazine journalism.

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Edited by Lewis H. Lapham (who introduced the Harper's Index as an editorial feature in the magazine in 1984) and senior editor Charis Conn, with an introduction by George Plimpton, this edition of *The Harper's Index Book* is historic, too: it's published in the sesquicentennial of *Harper's Magazine*, the oldest continuously published American magazine.

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See page 71 for details.

MAKING THE CASE FOR RACIAL REPARATIONS

Does America owe a debt to the descendants of its slaves?

Hardly a week goes by that we don't read of another gigantic lawsuit with thousands of plaintiffs and billions in damages. Once an esoteric legal device, the class-action lawsuit has become the dominant form of litigation to resolve bitter disputes over collective guilt and innocence that not so long ago played out in Congress. Indeed, our preening national legislature, besotted with special-interest money, seems rivaled by the big budgets and major issues that now thrive in the class-action courtroom.

At the same time, one hears rumblings among historians and philosophers to consider a lawsuit for slave reparations. After all, class-action lawyers have ridden to the rescue of those forced into slave labor in Germany and prostitution in Korea. The academics discuss such a slavery suit in moral, historical, or metaphysical terms. That's nice. But in this, the land of show-me-the-money, the thinking quickly becomes practical: Who gets sued? For how much? What's the legal argument? How do you get a case into court?

To answer these questions, *Harper's Magazine* invited four of the country's most successful class-action lawyers to strategize about how to bring America's most peculiar sorrow into a court of law.

forum is based on a discussion held at the Palm restaurant in Washington, D.C. Jack Hitt

contributing editor of Harper's Magazine.

Williams, Parenti, Finney, Lewis, McManus, Watson & Sperando, in Stuart, Florida.

. $1 billion settlement for black farmers in their discrimination case against the U.S. Department of
in Washington, D.C.

won a $4.00 million settlement for the state in its suit against tobacco companies in 1997 and is currently building a class-action suit against HMOs. He is an attorney with Scruggs, Millette, Bozeman & Dent, P.A., in Pascagoula, Mississippi.

won a $400 million settlement in last year's "fen-phen" diet-drug case against American Home Products Corporation and $145 million against the Ford Motor Company. He is an attorney with Langston Sweet & Freese, in Jackson, Mississippi.

CAUSE OF ACTION

We're here today to talk about how, that is, to repay blacks for what they suffered under slavery and what they've suffered

about. When many people hear the

they go nuts. "Oh, that

they say. "Can't we just leave this alone? Everybody's got gripes.

sonable.

people think slavery ended in 1865. And it did, but the af-

k, *The Debt*

think about this. In 1865 the fed-

Blacks. Without a dime, with no property, nearly all illiterate, they were let loose upon the land to wander. That's what begins the aftermath of slavery.

How many Americans know that 25 million blacks died in slavery? And how many know that virtual slavery was perpetuated for nearly a century after emancipation? Peonage laws made unpaid workers out of debtors. There were sharecropping schemes. Then Jim Crow laws. And even after that, there were other entrenched policies that have kept African Americans living in ghettos.

Robinson points out that until 1950 the federal government included in mortgage loans restrictive covenants preventing blacks—and only blacks, no other group—from buying houses in white neighborhoods. So blacks could not make their equity work for them. They couldn't move up.

A house is the largest single investment and asset most people have.

And it's how every immigrant first got into the middle class. So that policy effectively denied the arrival of the black middle class by half a century.

And banks kept up redlining loans to blacks, by redlining, by which they literally drew red lines on maps around neighborhoods and refused loans to even creditworthy people living there. That happened until

HITT: These are all compelling examples. And so you wonder: If Koreans can sue the Japanese about heinous acts carried out in the 1930s, and Jews are suing over prewar slave-labor camps, and American POW's imprisoned in Pacific camps are even suing the Japanese for slave-labor wages, why can't blacks also sue for similar recompense?

SWEET: It can be done. In fact, Alex won one of the great reparations lawsuits in the last few decades. He filed on behalf of—how many was it, Alex?

PIRES: Twenty-four thousand black families.

SWEET: Until 1997 the United States Department of Agriculture had an almost zero rate of granting black farmers loans. Until *1997*, okay?

PIRES: Ninety-five percent of all farm loans went to white farmers. And until the 1960s, the U.S.D.A. had a special section called "Negro Loans," which ensured that black applicants were rejected. It's amazing.

SWEET: It's amazing how young this country is and how close in time, when you come to think about it, all our history is. No part of our history is that far off. The effects of slavery are still with us, we all know that: single parents, black men wandering off from their families, a tradition of not going to school, distrust of the future. This is not black culture. It's slave culture.

GARY: My children and I have talked about your case, Alex. They've never been on a farm, but for them and a lot of black people you changed our whole thinking about what we can be in this country. If you're black, I mean, you're thinking, it's not going to happen, the government isn't going to give you a fair shake. Then all of a sudden you see this happen. I mean, the country stepped up to the plate.

PIRES: In the end, it did.

GARY: Man, it was such a big message. You know, as an African American I felt really good about it.

SWEET: So how do we make a case?

LEGAL STRATEGY I: BREACH OF CONTRACT

GARY: I think this could be a tort, a simple lawsuit where one party sues another.

HITT: So a variation of the classic "you deserve a wrong lawsuit. Just really big.

GARY: Specifically, it could be a breach of contract suit, too. After the war, former slaves were promised forty acres and a mule, and we never got it. That was a contract. It was a promise. We just have to stand up and tackle this wrong or try to make it right. So it could be a tort, it could be a breach of contract. You almost have to start a lawsuit to see where it can go. And I don't think that the fact that it's [illegible] should be a hindrance to people who [illegible] izing that it was a grave injustice. And until America accounts for its actions, this friction is always going to be there.

SWEET: Breach of contract and [illegible] *do* have a statute of limitations problem.

GARY: Not if Congress steps in.

HITT: But can you count on that?

PIRES: I don't think the [illegible] help until the lawsuit [illegible] that suit, and you have [illegible]

SWEET: Al, it's not like you [illegible] Al on that case. They had studies showing rank discrimination, years and years and years of it, and the courts [illegible]

PIRES: This is how these lawsuits go. Everybody said



Equality, by Betye Saar, 1999. Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York City

have any of that stuff. So it's going to require more than just a simple, single legal theory.

can prove fraudulent concealment.

Wait. In recent cases involving World War II slave-labor victims, the statute of limitations a crime upon humanity. So I say: If there ever crime upon humanity, what white folks did to black people is the worst that ever happened in this country. We would argue that it's problem. Well, actually there are two. The second is sovereign immunity—you can't sue the government without its consent.

But to take Willie's breach of contract argument, no former slave could have sued in 1870 and expected to get a hearing. Is the clock African Americans?

If not, you have to ask yourself: Is an injustice no longer an injustice so long as you get away with it for a long period of time?

Well, that gets us to the next logical question. no, Jack. That's never the first question.

: That's better.

THE DEFENDANTS

I think you have two defendants here. The mment and private individuals.

n private companies.

te individuals. There are huge, families in the South today that once tree labor of black folks. So when mer slave owners? You're

l slaves, had the plantations, nd because of the sweat and

suffering? I think some [illegible] powers in the United States. I think we just need their help. You have to [illegible] North Carolina, South Carolina.

SWEET: Mississippi, Alabama, all over.

[illegible]: As the days go by, I'm not reading the up... Martin Van Buren Hits... I think I speak for a lot of people when I ask, "How [illegible]" ...possible.

...It's possible. I don't think [illegible] going to be easy. You know we're ready to get in the trenches and fight [illegible] ready to get knocked down, kicked out of court, and everything else—then it's not the type of battle [illegible] it's because it will be a struggle.

[illegible]: Let's talk about the corporate defendants. You have in America, from the 1850s–1840s–1850s, the beginning of the greatest accumulation of our wealth. The early oil industry, for example, predates the Civil War. You've got to look back and find out, because many of those companies still exist under other names. Standard Oil, a.k.a. Esso, a.k.a. Exxon, is still here. They're all still here.

...Aetna Life, which has been around since ... which is still publishing, also apol... ...ning away, making a break for freedom.

FIRES: You look at a banker like J. P. Morgan and ... the other great banks' [illegible] ... whose original wealth dates back to the family of John Brown, whose descendants ... [illegible] ... Embarrassment? ... where he made his money.

Embarrassment?

FIRES: The Browns made much of their money as slave traders in the late eighteenth century.

So we've got the federal [illegible] government.

FIRES: And we've got the states.

And we've got the private profiteers.

SWEET: Looking good so far.

THE PLAINTIFFS

FIRES: Since we've agreed that our case would extend beyond the end of slavery, it seems to me that the issue of plaintiffs would be best dealt with if you think of the suit as falling into three time brackets. There's slavery up until 1865. Then ...

The following letter was published in *The Freedmen's Book*, a collection of African-American writings compiled by the abolitionist Lydia Maria Child in 1865. The letter is a response to a slave owner who has written to his former slave at the war's end, asking him to return to work in Tennessee.

To my old Master, Colonel P. H. Anderson, Big Spring, Tennessee.

Sir. I got your letter, and was glad to find that you had not forgotten Jourdon, and that you wanted me to come back and live with you again, promising to do better for me than anybody else can. I have often felt uneasy about you. I thought the Yankees would have hung you long before this, for harboring Rebs they found at your house. I suppose they never heard about your going to Colonel Martin's to kill the Union soldier that was left by his company in their stable. Although you shot at me twice before I left you, I did not want to hear of your being hurt, and am glad you are still living. It would do me good to go back to the dear old home again, and see Miss Mary and Miss Martha and Allen, Esther, Green, and Lee. Give my love to them all, and tell them I hope we will meet in the better world, if not in this. I would have gone back to see you all when I was working in the Nashville Hospital, but one of the neighbors told me that Henry intended to shoot me if he ever got a chance.

I want to know particularly what the good chance is you propose to give me. I am doing tolerably well here. I get twenty-five dollars a month, with victuals and clothing; have a comfortable home for Mandy,—the folks call her Mrs. Anderson,—and the children—Milly, Jane, and Grundy—go to school and are learning well. . . . We are kindly treated. Sometimes we overhear others saying, "Them colored people were slaves" down in Tennessee. The children feel hurt when they hear such remarks; but I tell them it was no disgrace in Tennessee to belong to Colonel Anderson. Many darkeys would have been proud, as I used to be, to call you master. Now if you will write and say what wages you will give me, I will be better able to decide whether it would be to my advantage to move back again.

As to my freedom, which you say I can have, there is nothing to be gained on that score, as I got my free papers in 1864 from the Provost-Marshal-General of the Department of Nashville. Mandy says she would be afraid to go back without some proof that you were disposed to treat us justly and kindly; and we have concluded to test your sincerity by asking you to send us our wages for the time [illegible] served you. This will make us forget and forgive old scores, and rely on your justice and friendship in the future. I served you [illegible] thirty-two years, and Mandy twenty years. At twenty-five dollars a month for me [illegible] dollars a week for Mandy, our earnings would amount to eleven thousand six hundred and eighty dollars. Add to this the interest [illegible] time our wages have been kept back, and deduct what you paid for our clothing, and three doctor's visits to me, and pulling a tooth for Mandy, and the balance will show what we are in justice entitled to. Please send the money by Adams's Express, in care of V. Winters, Esq., Dayton, Ohio. If you fail to pay us for faithful labors in the past, we can have little faith in your promises in the future. We trust the good Maker has opened your eyes to the wrongs which you and your fathers have done to me and my fathers, in making us toil for you for generations without recompense. . . . Surely there will be a day of reckoning for those who defraud the laborer of his hire.

In answering this letter, please state if there would be any safety for my Milly and Jane, who are now grown up, and both good-looking girls. You know how it was with poor Matilda and Catherine. I would rather stay here and starve—and die, if it come to that—than have my girls brought to shame by the violence and wickedness of their young masters. You will also please state if there has been any schools opened for the colored children in your neighborhood. The great desire of my life now is to give my children an education, and have them form virtuous habits.

Say howdy to George Carter, and thank him for taking the pistol from you when you were shooting at me.

From your old servant,
Jourdon Anderson

rnment-approved segregation for, what,

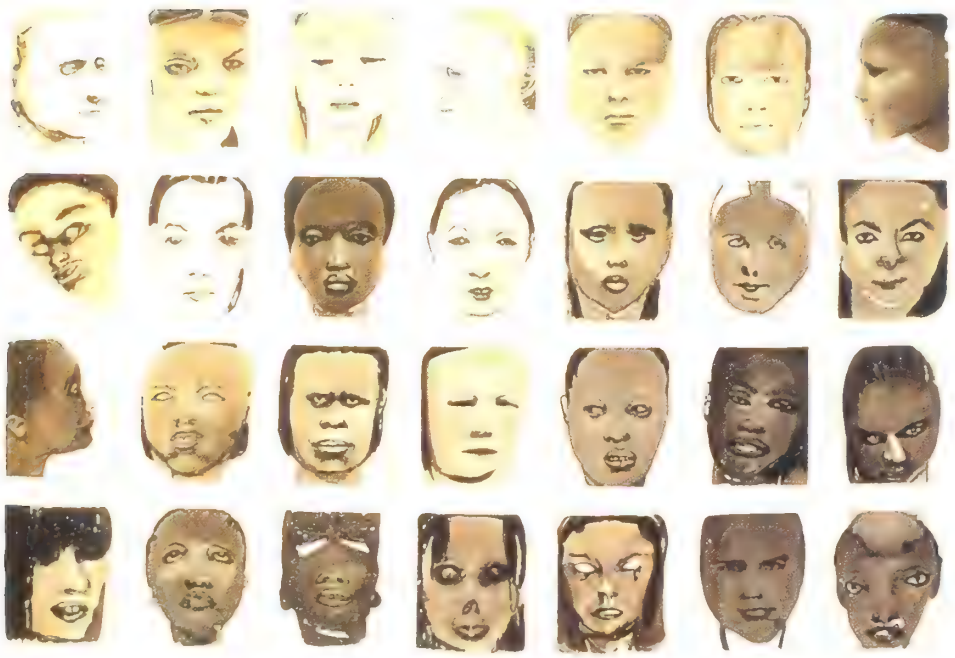
Denial.

because we have precedent—the Japanese internees, the Jews in Germany, we have lots of cases. So if I say, "We're going to go back to the 1940s, which is sixty years ago, and pick up claims," that's an easy case. But to

the 1870s is a little tougher, because of sovereign immunity and the statute of limitations

Well, that's one of Robinson's points in his

. Why not just stick to the more recent cases



e Dumas, 1994. Courtesy of Jack Tilton Gallery, New York City

Observer: . . . however you want to make your job as easy as you can and also put yourself in the best position to win. And to do that, you want to put your hands on those damages that you can quantify, so that you can develop them. You've got evidence still available, and you've got people. The only problem with it, though, is that this kind of lawsuit is going to appear in the court of public opinion, and you're going to need the support of the people.

PIRES: The white people.

GARY: And black people.

PIRES: Black people you got, right?

GARY: No, not necessarily.

PIRES: Black people aren't going to be happy with such a suit.

Observer: What about those people who, for whatever reason, maybe were excluded because you started in the 1940s? Would we pick up everybody? One third, two thirds, of all living blacks? I don't know. If you leave a substantial number of people outside . . . I mean, it's got to be like we are not leaving anyone behind. Because if we pick the best, most recent case, some people are going to complain. Then we've got to be prepared to meet the fight within the fight. And that could be a major problem.

PIRES: What's more important, to tell the real story of American slavery or to win specific damages from 1940 onward?

It's something we'd have to think about. You would have some people saying

PIRES: —you lawyers didn't do your job.

No, that we're taking the easiest way out. And that we're leaving people behind. No one should be left behind, and if you're going to do it, you should do it right, and it's not fair just for a few and not for all.

: Let me say this to you: All black folks are not going to be happy. You can go back 200 years, include every damage in the world, and you still will have blacks who are not happy.

Why?

: I mean, Clarence Thomas'll probably write

: mion saying it stigmatizes black folks to

Here. Why?

SWEET: You have some self-hating black folks. You'll even have some black folks who testify that they don't want to have the issue brought to the forefront.

SCRUGGS: There are so many different parts here that you have to think about. Let's get to this one. Who are your plaintiffs, first of all?

PIRES: Black people.

SCRUGGS: Well, okay. Does that include Tiger Woods? What are his damages? What are Denzel Washington's damages?

GARY: Well, one thing about a class-action lawsuit, you don't have to try to figure out the damages. You can do that on a grid.

HITT: Do you use some kind of damages formula when you're dealing with a large class like this?

GARY: Yes. But look here, we've got more non-Tiger Woodses than we have Tiger Woodses. For every Tiger Woods, we have 100,000 non-Tigers.

PIRES: That's true.

SWEET: Well, the thing about it is, in a class action, you have people with different degrees of damage. In my fen-phen case, some people were hurt. But some weren't. And, hell, some people even lost weight. I mean, they were better off, I guess. Some people died, of course.

GARY: But they were all still members of the class. They each experienced the risk.

SWEET: They were all members of the class, and their damages vary along with the degree of impact.

SCRUGGS: I think you'd need to really define the class pretty well, so you keep the Tiger Woodses and people like that out. You can't have people say, "Well, damn, you're going to give all this money to Tiger Woods or Denzel Washington."

SWEET: When you say "the class," you've got to remember that you're still covering a large majority of the black people in the United States of America. Then you have certain representatives who'll be in court with you.

SCRUGGS: Right, but you've got to come up with an appealing plaintiff, just like you would in an individual personal-injury case.

HITT: Who would you want to be representatives?

SWEET: You go and you pick them.

SCRUGGS: You interview a lot of people to pick somebody who's articulate, who's got an appealing personal case, and who is typical of the class that he's going to represent.

HITT: In the Japanese-American case, they brought forward as class representatives only the Japanese Americans who in the 1940s said, "I acquiesced to this because it was my patriotic duty." They did not bring forward the ones who rioted or resisted the draft.

SCRUGGS: Right. You don't want to trot Mike Tyson out there.

HITT: You want to trot out the [illegible] to the World War II [illegible] dom" home only to be told that [illegible] a black [illegible]

SCRUGGS: That's right. You carefully pick them.

PIRES: All our famous plaintiffs are selected. Rosa Parks was selected.

SCRUGGS: Yeah, Rosa Parks. Perfect example.

PIRES: They're all selected. I mean, the history of American plaintiffs, Jack, is that they are all selected. Remember Darrow's famous case, the Scopes trial? Well, the lawyers found Scopes by taking an ad out in the paper.

DAMAGES

PIRES: I have this theory about big lawsuits. Their chance of success is not really a matter of the plaintiff or the defendant, nor of legal theory, nor of arguments of liability. It is a matter of the damages to the plaintiff. People react to damages in a visceral way. Take Dickie's tobacco case. Why did people warm to it? Because the average person knows what medical costs are and how much he or she is spending on them. Poor folks have no medical insurance, and middle-class folks are gagging on paying for it. Then someone like Dickie Scruggs comes along and says, "We're going to sue on behalf of the attorneys general because the tobacco people are responsible for a lot of our medical costs, and they're not paying their fair share!" The average person says, "That's right, yeah. Screw them! It's hundreds of billions of dollars. Good! GET them!" No one cares about the technicalities.

GARY: That case also changed our whole attitude toward tobacco.

PIRES: In my black farmers' case, people finally said, "Hey, blacks are farming without access to loans? I've had trouble getting loans. Give them a hearing!" People relate to it. They react to those damages, and they say, "We're going to pay these black folks for what we did to them." It wasn't liability-based, it was damages-based. Every decade has its case. In the seventies it was [illegible]. And in the nineties it was tobacco. People reacted to those damages too. "Break up this big monopoly." [illegible] make our damages appealing?

SCRUGGS: First, by making it clear that the damages are not just about money. You know that old saying: If you catch a man a fish, you've fed him for a day; if you teach him how to fish, you've [illegible] and that's what I'm talking about here. Regardless of whether the defendant is the federal government or a corporate institution that profited from the inhuman treatment of blacks—like German corporations that used Jewish slave labor to make

cause you can change the thinking of generations unborn, the future of race relations in America.

[illegible]: Let's talk with the law

[illegible]: No, that's important. It would say that America stepped up to the plate and acknowledged its wrongdoing and reached out to the people and said there is justice for all. It would change things—the way you and I see each other. It would be nice, you know, sometime to sit down together, and you say "I'm sorry" and I say "I'm sorry," and then we could just break bread together. We can go forward, we can do greater things than we ever anticipated.

[illegible]: But when I was asking a black woman once about this, I said, "You know, maybe in the end the money should all be directed toward the poorest of African Americans, because they are the real heirs of slavery's worst tragedy, the people in the ghettos. And we'll aim that money at them." And she goes, "No, no. I want some of the money." Wouldn't you want just a little bit of that money, Willie? For the symbolism of it, if nothing else? Just for the satisfaction?

GARY: There is the money.

[illegible]: Money is not the solution. It's setting in place institutions and programs.

[illegible]: Education.

[illegible]: Exactly. It's the difference between giving them the fish and teaching them how to fish.

SWEET: I think a small part of it is going to be the money and the remedies. But the message that will be sent is so important. By having the

[illegible]: That's a different goal.

But there's got to be money, because it goes a long way toward achieving the very goals [illegible]

[illegible] put my position this way: "Say the government finally admitted, 'You're right. It's the most unique in the history of our country. We're the most successful nation on earth [illegible] awarded damages.'"

[illegible] you want healing, be

They lost it all.

[illegible]: Multigenerational.

People will worry about that.

[illegible] saying that blacks are less sophisticated than whites. If you gave money to a bunch of WASP Harvard graduates, they'd blow through it, too. It's human nature.

[illegible]: So, the better part of the solution [illegible] the victory itself, the benefit that [illegible] recognized by this country that [illegible] to order.

TIMELINE OF REPARATIONS FOR AMERICAN SLAVERY

General William Tecumseh Sherman issues Special Field Order #15, providing forty-acre tracts of captured land along the Atlantic coast, from South Carolina to [illegible] for 40,000 former slaves.

[illegible] establishes the [illegible] Bureau in March to [illegible] distribution of land [illegible] Andrew Johnson reverses the "forty acres and a mule" provision, ordering the Freedmen's Bureau [illegible] land to the pardoned landholders. Later, the claim of forty acres and a mule is, oddly dismissed in many [illegible] standard history books. For example, the [illegible] vised edition of *The Civil War Dictionary* begins its entry with this phrase: "Legend that sprang up among the newly-freed slaves

Congress passes the Southern Homestead Act to provide freedmen with land in southern states at a cost of $5 for eighty acres. Act fails dismally; only 1,000 freedmen receive homesteads.

Republican Representative Thaddeus Stevens proposes H.R. 29, a slave-reparations bill, which promises each freed adult male slave forty acres of land and $100 to build a dwelling. "[The freedmen] must necessarily . . . be the servants and the victims of others [illegible] they are made in some [illegible] dependent of their wiser neighbors," Stevens argues.

Treasury Department is sued for $68 million in remuneration [illegible] performed under slav- [illegible] vernment dismisses [illegible] grounds of sovereign [illegible]

[illegible] Queen Mother Audley Mo[illegible] founds the Reparations Co[illegible]ee of Descendants of United St[illegible]s Slaves after [illegible]

encyclopedia" that "a captive people have one hundred years to state their judicial claims against their captors or international law will consider you satisfied with your condition."

Queen Mother Moore's reparations committee files a claim in California.

James Forman, a radical activist and member of SNCC, interrupts Sunday services at Manhattan's Riverside Church and presents his "Black Manifesto" demanding that American churches and synagogues pay $500 million in reparations.

National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA) established to seek reparations from the federal government in the form of a domestic "Marshall Plan" for black Americans.

Representative John Conyers proposes H.R. 3745, the first of several unsuccessful proposals for the formation of a commission to study reparations for American slavery.

Florida agrees to pay $2.1 million in reparations to the survivors of the 1923 Rosewood massacre.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals rules in *Cato* v. *United States,* holding that the claim for $100 million in reparations and an apology for slavery lacks a "legally cognizable basis," and concluding that the "legislature, rather than the judiciary, is the appropriate forum" for such claims.

Representative Conyers proposes H.R. 40, seeking a formal apology for slavery and providing for a commission to study reparations.

Representative Tony Hall proposes H.R. 356, a formal resolution to acknowledge and apologize for slavery.

whole country come forward and say, "This is a nation has gone on too long," that's a huge step.

GARY: And for every dollar paid the government would get a $100 return.

HITT: Charles Krauthammer, a conservative columnist, is very much in favor of black reparations.

GARY: Really?

HITT: He says that black reparations make sense. We've done something wrong, we need to pay for it, right? He sees it in pure economic terms, as if it were the nation's biggest tort claim in history. They were done wrong. Let's figure out an adequate sum of compensation and pay. Then he adds: And affirmative action doesn't make sense, because we're unfairly putting one person ahead of another person. So let's eliminate all the minority-preference programs, and then let's move forward with the pay schedule.

GARY: It makes a lot of sense. No doubt about it.

PIRES: Wait a minute. What fundamentally separates black folks from white folks? Not money, but education?

SWEET: I say it you're forced to go through a trial, and you're forced to stand up there and talk about damages, the only thing to do is quantitatively ask for damages, for money.

PIRES: You can't think that money will be enough. What do you really want, Dennis? Huh?

SWEET: I'm saying that's all you can ask for.

PIRES: Suppose the judge says, "What do you want me to give you? You want money? You want education? You want access to housing? You want health care?" Dennis, what do you want?

SWEET: Al, Al, Al, hold on, hold on a second. Let me tell you this: If you're in a situation with a jury, then you can only ask for monetary relief. If you have a judge, you can say, "Judge, I need you to create these programs," or other more nuanced solutions.

SCRUGGS: That's right. All a jury can do is award money.

PIRES: What's that going to fix when the only major difference between black folks and white folks today is education.

SWEET: Oh, no, no, no, no. Noooo.

PIRES: It's the level of education. That's the biggest difference.

SCRUGGS: Well, that attitude's pretty rough.

SWEET: It's not just education. It's like, you know, Chris Rock, the comedian, said it best. He has a bit in his act where he's talking to just a normal white guy and says, "Despite all the changes in society, you wouldn't switch places with me, a black man." Then he pauses. "And I'm rich!" The thing is, there are a lot of benefits to being white. A lot.

HITT: But that's the nice thing about arguing about damages. You get specific. What do we need to fix this." Alex [illegible] judge and, "Okay, you win," [illegible] yourself for."

SCRUGGS: That was the very toughest thing [illegible] in our tobacco case. We asked [illegible] hypothetically: If the chairmen of the boards of these major tobacco companies walked in here today and said, "Okay, we're ready to [illegible] deal," what did we want? It took us a year to come to some general consensus among the attorneys general and some of the public-health advocates as to what we really wanted if we had these guys by the throat. What we found out later was once we got what everybody had said he or she wanted, that wasn't enough.

PIRES: Not enough money, $368 billion?

SCRUGGS: No, no. It wasn't enough money. There wasn't enough money in the world to satisfy some people. And it wouldn't have mattered. The problem is that there are people invested in the fight, okay? I mean, like, some people in Palestine or Northern Ireland don't want the wars to end.

GARY: That's the other fight within the fight. Some black people are not going to want you to settle this case and then win.

SCRUGGS: Exactly. This was the biggest mistake we made in tobacco. We did not anticipate the self-interest of some of the health groups in perpetuating their existence and their fund-raising. Because bashing big tobacco was their fundamental way to raise money.

PIRES: Tobacco-Free Kids?

SCRUGGS: Well, they were on board, strangely enough, but some groups like the American Lung Association saw their fund-raising threatened by a tobacco solution.

PIRES: Because when you take away their core issue, people are not happy. If I said to Dennis, "Is education the problem, is that what we're looking for?" and you say, "Let's educate two generations of black folks," people say, "I'm not happy with that. That doesn't do it."

SWEET: I just want you to realize where Chris Rock is saying. It's more complex than one thing.

HITT: If Congress intervened in this case, Dennis, would you be happy—in return for a generous reparations deal—to eliminate all minority-preference programs?

SWEET: There's so little left. Sure.

SCRUGGS: What I have envisioned would be a super-affirmative-action program, much more than traditional affirmative-action programs.

HITT: So you're [illegible] with [illegible]?

SCRUGGS: I really have not read this gentleman's work, and I may be doing it a disservice. But if he's just offering money in return for eliminating affirmative action, then no.

HITT: No?

SCRUGGS: I think that's tokenism. Reparations doesn't mean just a bunch of cash payments.

[illegible] Congresses to say, "We've [illegible] hat did they do with the money? [illegible] they [illegible] like [illegible]

[illegible] rly. The white schools are being funded more properly." The judge says, "Okay, [illegible] what's the remedy?" Hell, the remedy kicked us in the butts. You [illegible] "Okay, we're [illegible] lose this black school, and we're going to close that black school because of improper [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] each black person $5,000, that would be a disaster. Then we would have eliminated any moral claim to criticizing the causes that have led to widespread African-American poverty, and in return for what?

[illegible]: In this case, the money's necessary but the [illegible] y's not enough.

LEGAL STRATEGY II: MULTIPLE TORTS

[illegible]: I get the feeling that everyone wants to [illegible] the United States government. [illegible] the federal government be [illegible] the states? We haven't talked [illegible]

[illegible]: I'll tell you a claim that's ready to go. It's [illegible] uld at least serve [illegible] Mississippi is [illegible]

[illegible] nization.

[illegible] l public [illegible] funded this [illegible] to keep [illegible] who [illegible] ted [illegible]

[illegible] including the [illegible] cutting all the way back [illegible] The statute of limitations. You've got a statute of limitations even under the civil rights acts.

SWEET: Yeah, but you have a fraudulent concealment [illegible] the statute of limitations doesn't kick in until after the fraudulent concealment has been exposed. Well, there's no fraudulent concealment that none of the documents on Lunsford conducted in there shall be open to the public, it was fraudulently concealed from the public. And they're all concealing some of the Sovereignty Commission's work. So the statute would start from the time those documents were first opened to the public, which is right now.

[illegible]: So you'd pick up thousands and thousands of people just with that lawsuit. Then you could branch out and pick up families in every state in the union.

[illegible]: No problem.

GARY: Just recently American General Life and Accident Insurance Company paid out more than $200 million for overcharging black Americans for standard insurance premiums over the last decades. We could file a couple of those types of lawsuits as well.

HITT: Willie, are you suggesting a strategy of filing, say, a web of lawsuits—the Aetnas, Fleet banks, on the one hand, and then state and federal governments too?

GARY: I think we could get class representatives from each state in the union. If you're going to go after the government, you do all in one.

PIRES: If we filed a pile of lawsuits, you could put a judge in a position where the statute of limitations would be hard to invoke. If there were a national audience watching, then what judge is going to want to be the man who went down a laundry list of several dozen incredibly powerful and legitimate claims and had to dismiss them on a technicality? It might make it difficult.

GARY: If you've got a public outcry, a political movement behind it, while we're in the process of getting ready to rule, I think that can affect the way a judge is going to rule. It can make him not want to rule, it can make him hold and then perhaps Congress will step in and you can talk settlement. There are so many things you'd have to do at once. But you definitely need a massive public-relations program. You'd want [illegible] Washingtons and your Danny [illegible] Ford. You get the black athletes in the NFL to stand with you, you get the NFL to stand with you. And then you might go to someone high in the ministry, because you want top-flight black people—Reverend Jesse Jackson, NAACP president Kweisi Mfume, all [illegible] to stand with you. Then it's a different ball game.

[illegible] Just prominent black people?

[illegible]: No, black and white people. And the same with the lawyers. It should not just be black lawyers. Look, right now I'm fighting for a white client down in Orlando, very conservative area. There aren't going to be any black people on the jury. But I've got an old white fellow who's shuffling around with a walking cane! And I'm helping him in and out of the court. The two of us. Let me tell you, it neutralizes a whole lot of shit.

PIRES: So it would be important to have both black and white lawyers up front?

GARY: That's right. If you need a lawyer today, the best thing you could do is have a black lawyer fight for you. And for this case, black and white lawyers fighting together. Look, it was a long, long time before people came on board with Stevie Wonder when he was fighting all those years to make Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday a holiday. But after a while Barbra Streisand and other people came on board, saying it's the right damn thing to do. And all of a sudden the issue changed.

SCRUGGS: You're right, you can't do this case without a public-relations strategy.

GARY: This is the type of case where if you bring certain pressure to bear, if you have the right kind of public support for it, both black and white, then nobody's going to say, "Okay, here's another example of the blacks just trying to get something for nothing."

HITT: When the Jews suing in the slave-labor case were preparing their strategy, that was one of their concerns—that the suit would also promote an old ugly stereotype of Jews and money.

GARY: Same thing here. Blacks trying to get something for nothing. But not if we have a public-relations strategy in place when we begin.

HITT: But correct me if I'm wrong. Overall, are you saying that you file numerous cases at the same time so that one has a fighting chance to change the way people think? [illegible] For example, if you file the slave-[illegible] maybe Willie's breach of contract and they are dismissed, then does that make, say, the more recent, more economically quantifiable [illegible] about mortgage covenants seem that much more possible to win?

SCRUGGS: Exactly. You can make us look clever, right, reasonable by filing some outrageous case over here.



Lullaby, by Betye Saar, 1999. Courtesy of Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York City

HITT: Yeah. So some of those filings would be to your best case, what historians say Malcolm X was for Martin Luther King. Malcolm made King's once dicey demands look mainstream.

SCRUGGS: That's not a bad strategy. That's something you have to think about. In other words, get Pat Buchanan in your face so that you'll look—no matter how conservative you are—very reasonable.

GARY: If we file a mess of cases against the states, isn't it also likely that the state would implead the federal government?

HITT: What does that mean?

GARY: A person charged with a crime can implead other defendants, saying, in effect, "Hey, it I did it, this guy did it, too. We should share the punishment."

SCRUGGS: The states could [illegible] the federal government and say, "Hey, wait, we're not going to pick up this tab. We were doing what you all gave us the right to do, all this suit started in Washington, D.C."

GARY: Next. The suit would then prove the liability of the federal government for you.

PRO BONO?

PIRES: I have a question for you all, and you should be [illegible] be. When we put together the [illegible], I thought the only way I could get black folks to trust a white lawyer was to give them an [illegible] agreement that said we would work [illegible] that they set 100 percent of their recovery

LEGAL STRATEGY III: DUE PROCESS

there's another way besides a damages lawsuit un-

How about a Fourteenth and Fifth Amendment lawsuit against the federal government for either failure to enact sufficient laws to ensure due process or for passing laws that perpetuated the injustice?

Just like in the sixties when Congress ordered white legislatures in Mississippi and other southern states to appropriate money for black schools or for school integration. They said no state or local government that discriminated could receive federal aid. They forced the state legislatures to appropriate money.

So you're suing for a denial of due process to black people.

It would be a case under the laws and the Constitution of the United States, to the effect that under the imprimatur of the United States of America and the protection of the government, black men and women were brought to this country as slaves, against their will and were kept in bondage for a hundred or more years. Remember, slavery existed far longer under the Stars and Stripes than under the Stars and Bars. There were

A LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL HISTORY OF AMERICAN SLAVERY AND ITS AFTERMATH

Twenty Africans sold as bond servants in Jamestown, Virginia.

Dutch West India Company given a monopoly of the American slave trade

Virginia's general assembly determines that "[C]hildren got by an Englishman upon a Negro woman shall be bond or free according to the condition of the mother," effectively sanctioning the breeding of slaves by slaveholders.

Maryland provides that African slaves shall serve for the duration of their lives.

Maryland declares that baptism does not alter slave status.

King Charles II charters the Royal African Company with exclusive rights to provide the [illegible] th Africans, putting [illegible] he vanguard of the [illegible] race by century's end.

[illegible] Germantown, [illegible] draft an antislavery

[illegible] upon blacks [illegible] estate [illegible] es that if

New Orleans establishes the Black Code, with fifty-five articles designed to regulate the behavior of slaves.

Vermont becomes the first American territory to declare slavery illegal.

Virginia outlaws the trafficking of slaves into the commonwealth.

The Virginia Assembly passes Thomas Jefferson's "A Bill Concerning Slaves," restricting the movements of slaves and requiring white women who bear mulatto children to leave the commonwealth with their children.

The state constitution of Massachusetts declares colored persons descended of African slaves to be citizens.

Maryland forbids further importation of slaves.

The Constitutional Convention determines that for the purposes of representation and taxation slaves will be counted as three fifths of a free man.

The first census of the United States records 757,000 black Americans, composing 19 percent of the population. More than 697,000 of them are slaves.

Free Negroes of Charleston, South Carolina, protest severe legal disabilities and request to be treated as citizens.

Construction begins on the White House in Washington, D.C., requiring an influx of slaves to lay the foundation.

Congress passes the Fugitive Slave Act, which allows slave owners to seize runaways in any state or territory and sets fines for the harboring of fugitive slaves at $500.

Three slaves are executed in Albany, New York, for antislavery activities.

Congress rejects the North Carolina Slave Petition, the first recorded petition for an end to slavery by freed blacks.

Boston refuses to support black schools.

Underground Railroad begins when a Revolutionary War officer purchases a slave and takes him to Pennsylvania. The slave's mother later escapes and follows her son north.

Virginia forbids all evening meetings of slaves.

Congress prohibits further importation of slaves.

Maryland denies free blacks the right to vote.

The American Colonization Society is established to send freed blacks to Africa.

The Missouri Compromise, admitting Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state, prohibits slavery in the rest of the Louisiana Purchase north of th 36th parallel.

The American Colonization Society establishes the Liberian colony on the west coast of Afr

New York enacts gradual emancipation law.

Nat Turner leads a slave rebellion in Southampton County in Virginia, killing fifty-five whites. One hundred twenty blacks are killed in retaliation in less than two days.

Mississippi law declares th it is "unlawful for any slave, free Negro, or mulatto to preach th Gospel." Violators receive thirty nine lashes upon their naked back.

Alabama law declares that "any person or persons who sh attempt to teach any free perso of color or slave to spell, read c write, shall, upon conviction thereof by indictment, be fined a sum not less than $250, nor more than $500."

Congress passes a resoluti ceding authority over slave law to the states.

Liberia declares independence.

The Compromise of 1850 re sults in a new Fugitive Slave Ac strengthening slaveholders' abi to capture runaways in the nort ern free states.

certain half-assed measures taken after the Civil War to try to enfranchise and rectify the injustice that had been done. But they were very ineffectual and incomplete. After the Reconstruction era, when whites regained power in the South, where most blacks lived, they went back to an era of repression, keeping blacks uneducated—

[illegible]. And segregated

[illegible] and disenfranchised. There were parallel societies, mostly in the South, less so in most northern cities. Nevertheless, because the federal government failed to enforce the Fifth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, the state governments were allowed to continue with this disparate treatment of black Americans. And the result is that now blacks are disadvantaged in comparison with whites and most other races in America. The federal government should be compelled to rectify that imbalance by passing legislation that accomplishes certain stated goals. Then there would have to be a federal court order that required the Congress of the United States to accomplish these goals within the satisfaction of the Court—pretty much like what the 1964 Civil Rights Act [illegible] states [illegible] the federal government appropriate money for programs that helped rectify the imbalance. If the legislature didn't rectify problems, it [illegible] the states lost federal funding. I think that kind of a lawsuit has a far greater public appeal, and a greater legal foundation, than does simply suing for money for a generation of black people. Because nobody is going to think that will be effective, other than making a few people rich for a short time, not rich, but getting some money in their pockets for a short time. And then the next generation is going to be in the same spot.

SWEET: You know what's nice about this due-process lawsuit? It does away with a lot of the complaints that "we were also done wrong" from the Irish or other minorities precisely because it recognizes the fundamental difference. African Americans were kept down by the force of law, not custom, and then every effort to lift the burden of the law was met with denial of due process. So under this lawsuit, what you're saying is, We're going to give black folks a fair chance to assimilate, just like

The Supreme Court rules *Dred Scott* v. *John F. A. nford*, declaring that the ssouri Compromise is uncon- utional, that blacks are not zens, and that a slave does become free upon entering ee state.

Congress abolishes slavery in District of Columbia and the itories.

President Abraham Lincoln ues the Emancipation Procla- tion, freeing slaves in the Con- erate states.

The Thirteenth Amendment is fied, abolishing slavery in the ited States.

Congress passes the Civil hts Act on April 9, granting zenship and equal rights to ck Americans.

The Fourteenth Amendment passed, guaranteeing to all S. citizens due process and ual protection under the law.

Congress grants black zens the right to vote in the trict of Columbia and the terri- ies.

The first of several Recon- uction Acts places Confeder- states under federal military e.

The Fifteenth Amendment is ssed, guaranteeing black ericans the right to vote.

The Civil Rights Act of 1875 passed, guaranteeing equal rights to black Americans in public accommodations and in service on a jury.

Mississippi elects the first black, Republican Blanche Kelso Bruce, to the United States Senate for a full six-year term.

The Compromise of 1877 ends Reconstruction.

Tennessee segregates railroad cars. Other southern states follow suit.

The Supreme Court declares the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional, holding that the Fourteenth Amendment forbids states, but not citizens, from discriminating against blacks.

The Mississippi Plan requires black voters to pass literacy and "understanding" tests, leading the effort by southern states to disenfranchise black citizens.

Supreme Court rules in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*, establishing the separate-but-equal doctrine

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is established to advocate for civil rights for black Americans.

Baltimore approves the first city ordinance designating the boundaries of black and white neighborhoods.

President Woodrow Wilson institutes federal segregation of workplaces, restrooms, and lunchrooms.

Marcus Garvey establishes a Universal Negro Improvement Association branch in the United States and launches the "Back to Africa" movement.

Costigan-Wagner Antilynching Bill defeated in Congress.

Supreme Court rules in *Shelley* v. *Kraemer*, one of several [illegible] using-discrimination cases, that enforcement of restrictive covenants by state courts is unconstitutional.

President Harry S Truman integrates the armed forces.

Supreme Court ruling on *Brown* v. *Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* strikes down the separate-but-equal doctrine.

Congress passes the Civil Rights Act of 1957—the first since Reconstruction—creating a Civil Rights Division in the Justice Department and the Civil Rights Commission to study all aspects of segregation.

The Civil Rights Act of 1960 outlaws interference with desegregation orders and voter rights. The Supreme Court declares segregation in bus and railway terminals unconstitutional in *Boynton* v. *Virginia*.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 creates the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and prohibits discrimination by businesses and employers.

The Voting Rights Act is passed to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment. 250,000 blacks register to vote by the end of the year.

The Civil Rights Act of 1968 prohibits discrimination in housing.

Supreme Court ruling in *Regents of the University of California* v. *Bakke* strikes down quota system in university admissions.

The Regents of the University of California vote to end affirmative action in university admissions.

California votes in favor of Proposition 209 to ban affirmative action in government employment and college admissions.

Washington citizens vote to ban affirmative action in government employment and college admissions. Similar efforts follow in Florida.

After an investigation reveals that black drivers on the New Jersey Turnpike were five times more likely than white drivers to be stopped by New Jersey State Police, the Justice Department appoints a state monitor.

Is that where you're ultimately headed? Is

mentum that Congress will step in and

to settlement.

the legislature.

That's what happened with the Japanese internment case. Congress was so embarrassed by the claims that it passed a reparations-settlement bill. Each aggrieved Japanese Ame received $20,0

But that case was easier, legally, to get started.

Court decision in 1944 declaring the Jap

How did they get around that?

They got Congress to open an investigation into the facts that the government supplied the

the Court decision suddenly was no longer a lock to the case.

There's a way in which educating people about history, through this lawsuit, makes it more

Congress often gets involved in these cases because there are matters of justice that just can't be litigated fairly within the strictures of our common law and our Constitution.

What I hear you saying is, ultimately, that many class-action suits are just giant goads to

the elegance of the law to motivate our legisla-

should be doing anyway.

It's true. We're getting social change from

How the hell did that happen?

institution had just thrown off a

them as a colony. They had no rights, no democracy to speak of. They were not about to

another dictator. So they created a

freedom, but at the price of governmental inefficiency. This inefficiency has worsened over time to the point that the political branches of government are capable of solving only the most compelling and broad national

Like what

peace, things like that. And

THE META-STRATEGY

You know, all these theories have

think we

on the le-

what's happened is that issues like what we're talking about now, big issues that are very important to people, like abortion, like HMOs, you name it, are

PIRES: Avoided?

SCRUGGS: No, no. They're exploited, by both political parties. So what's happened is that anything that's going to get solved is punted to the court system.

PIRES: I believe that.

SCRUGGS: The courts have become a safety net. Those in charge of the political branches aren't interested in solutions, only in exploiting the issues for fund-raising purposes.

HITT: Perhaps that explains why the makeup of the Supreme Court is, if you think about, the only thing our two presidential candidates deeply differ on.

GARY: Getting this to Congress also solves the statute of limitations problems.

PIRES: And sovereign immunity.

GARY: Congress can do whatever it wants to do in terms of waiving this and that.

PIRES: It can pass any law it wants.

SCRUGGS: Getting a political solution is the cleanest way to get it done. But today's Congress must be forced to act.

PIRES: Congress won't get there until you get there.

HITT: Very Zen.

SWEET: That's why Congress won't pass the Conyers resolution out of committee.

HITT: What's that?

SWEET: Michigan Representative John Conyers Jr. proposed a bill to apologize for slavery. Congress won't even do that.

HITT: Why not?

SWEET: Probably because it also seeks to authorize a congressional study group to look into slavery.

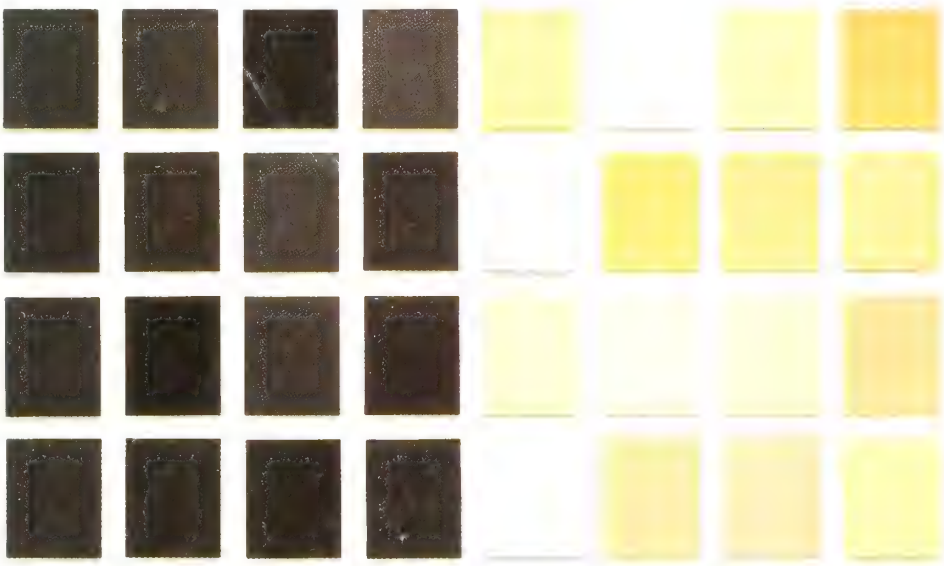
HITT: A study group?

SWEET: You have to remember: The last congressional study group like this was the one looking into the *Korematsu* decision. It exposed all the injustices underlying the Supreme Court decision permitting the Japanese internment. By the time the study group finished its work, it was clear that a court case was possible. Congress won't apologize or allow the study group, because it's afraid of precisely this lawsuit—that the lawyers in the *Hopi*

might reconvene, and not just to chat.

PIRES: And maybe file a complaint before

You know, it all gets back to the lack of standing by the people you mentioned at the beginning, Jack. The people who say, "How could you possibly sue for slavery?" True, you've got all these technical legal problems—the statute of limitations, sovereign immunity, class-certification problems, defining the damages, and the rest. But you have to remember that the judiciary is the only branch of our government that has nothing to do. It sits there, waiting. The legislature writes laws, and the executive carries them out. But our judges sit and wait for us to come with a complaint, which is a kind of prayer. It says, "Judge, I have this story to tell. It's a story of an injustice. It's a new story—a new way of understanding an old injustice. And I ask you today to hear this case, to listen to my story." Sometimes they do. Sometimes, if we play it right, they hear your prayer. ■



Black and White, Version #1, by Glenn Ligon and Byron Kim, 1993. Courtesy of the artists and D'Amelio Terras Gallery, New York City.

Editor's Note: As the issue was going to press, the four-month-old effort, coordinated by Professor Charles Ogletree of the Harvard Law School, had begun meeting with other lawyers, including attorneys from Johnnie Cochran's law firm, Cochran, Cherry, Givens & Smith, in order to continue this conversation. Although [illegible] declined to discuss the details, he confirmed the existence of a volunteer group and its intention to file a reparations lawsuit for the injuries [illegible] aftermath against the government of the United States.

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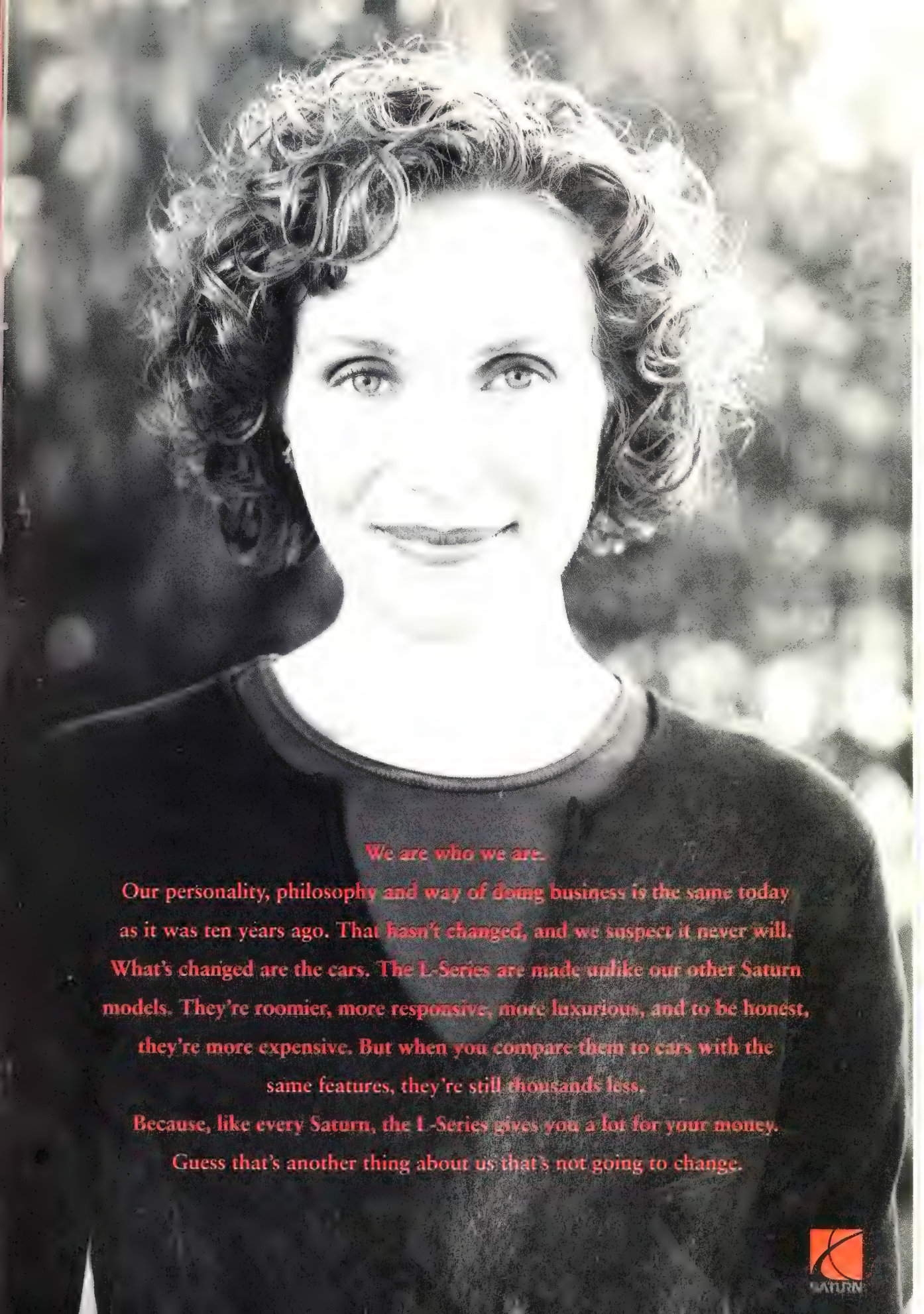






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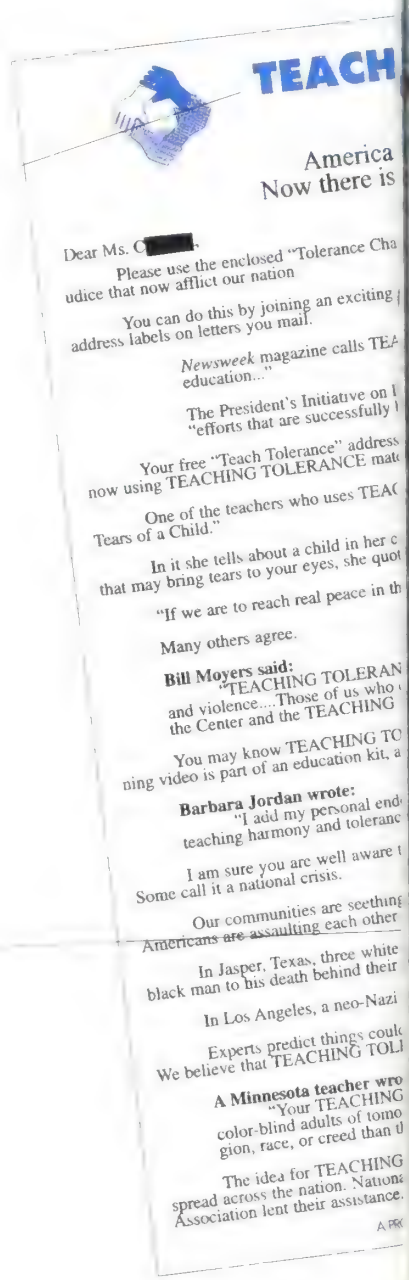
Guess that's another thing about us that's not going to change.

SATURN

THE CHURCH

How the Southern Poverty Law C

[illegible] Who could be against combating so virtuous? And who would have come up with the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Montgomery, Alabama–based group that recently sent out this heartwarming yet mildly terrifying appeal to raise money for its "Teaching Tolerance" program, which prepares educational kits for schoolteachers? Cofounded in 1971 by civil rights lawyer cum direct-marketing millionaire Morris Dees, a leading critic of [illegible] and author of books that led to the subject of a made-for-TV movie, the SPLC spent much of its early years defending prisoners who faced the death penalty and suing to desegregate all-white institutions like Alabama's highway patrol. [illegible] the SPLC spent much of its time—and money—on a relentless fund-raising campaign, peddling membership in the civil rights movement with all the zeal of a circuit rider passing the collection plate. "He's the Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker of the civil rights movement," renowned anti-death-penalty lawyer Millard Farmer says of Dees, his former associate, "though I don't mean to malign Jim and Tammy Faye." The center earned $44 million last year alone—$27 million from fund-raising and $17 million from stocks and other investments—but spent only $13 million on civil rights programs, [illegible] in the country.


TEACH

America
Now there is

Dear Ms. C[redacted]

Please use the enclosed "Tolerance Cha
udice that now afflict our nation

You can do this by joining an exciting
address labels on letters you mail.

Newsweek magazine calls TEA
education..."

The President's Initiative on
"efforts that are successfully

Your free "Teach Tolerance" address
now using TEACHING TOLERANCE mat

One of the teachers who uses TEAC
Tears of a Child."

In it she tells about a child in her c
that may bring tears to your eyes, she quot

"If we are to reach real peace in th

Many others agree.

Bill Moyers said:
"TEACHING TOLERAN
and violence....Those of us who
the Center and the TEACHING

You may know TEACHING TO
ning video is part of an education kit, a

Barbara Jordan wrote:
"I add my personal end
teaching harmony and tolerance

I am sure you are well aware
Some call it a national crisis.

Our communities are seething
Americans are assaulting each other

In Jasper, Texas, three white
black man to his death behind their

In Los Angeles, a neo-Nazi

Experts predict things coul
We believe that TEACHING TOL

A Minnesota teacher wro
"Your TEACHING
color-blind adults of tomo
gion, race, or creed than t

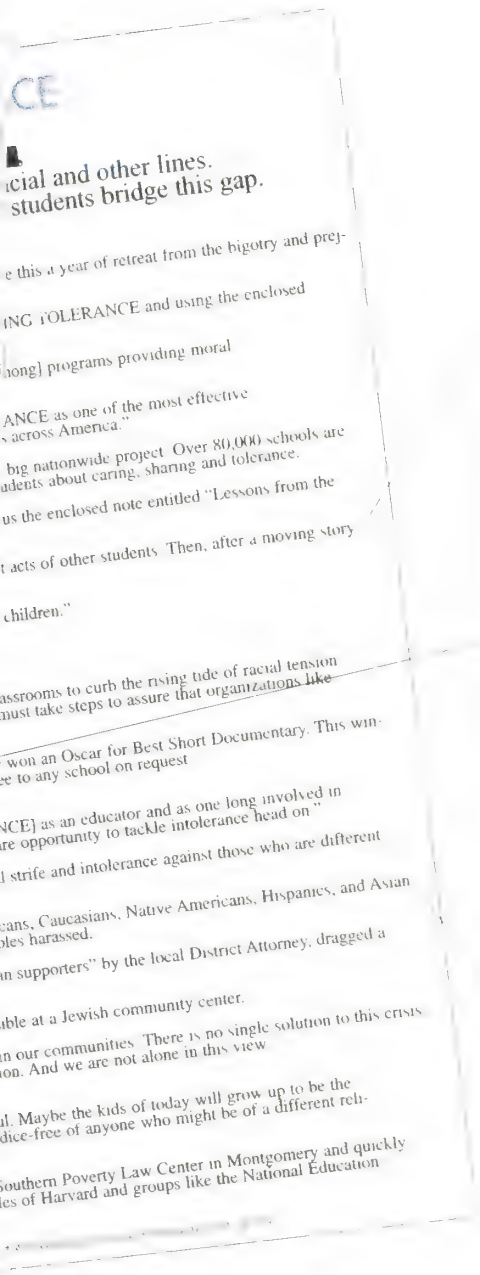
The idea for TEACHING
spread across the nation. Nationa
Association lent their assistance.

A PR

The Ku Klux Klan, the SPLC's favorite nemesis, has shrunk from 4 million members in the 1920s to an estimated [illegible] many of [illegible] thought to be FBI informants. But news of a declining Klan does not make for [illegible] which is why the SPLC [illegible] direct-mail alarums full of nightmarish invocations of "armed Klan paramilitary forces" and "violent neo-Nazi extremists," and [illegible] villains—like Idaho's arch-Aryan Richard Butler—eager to [illegible] Klansmen. The UKA's total assets amounted to a warehouse [illegible] hate groups commit almost no violence. More than 95 [illegible] ters cite (bombings, church burnings, school shootings), are perpetrated [illegible] the most extensive investigations in the FBI's history [illegible]

[illegible]ORRIS DEES

[illegible] from intolerance, *by Ken Silverstein*



CE

[illegible]cial and other lines.
students bridge this gap.

e this a year of retreat from the bigotry and prej-

ING TOLERANCE and using the enclosed

long] programs providing moral

ANCE as one of the most effective
across America."

big nationwide project. Over 80,000 schools are
adents about caring, sharing and tolerance.

us the enclosed note entitled "Lessons from the

t acts of other students. Then, after a moving story

children."

assrooms to curb the rising tide of racial tension
must take steps to assure that organizations like

won an Oscar for Best Short Documentary. This win-
ee to any school on request

NCE] as an educator and as one long involved in
re opportunity to tackle intolerance head on."

l strife and intolerance against those who are different

cans, Caucasians, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Asian
ples harassed.

n supporters" by the local District Attorney, dragged a

able at a Jewish community center.

n our communities. There is no single solution to this crisis
on. And we are not alone in this view.

l. Maybe the kids of today will grow up to be the
dice-free of anyone who might be of a different reli-

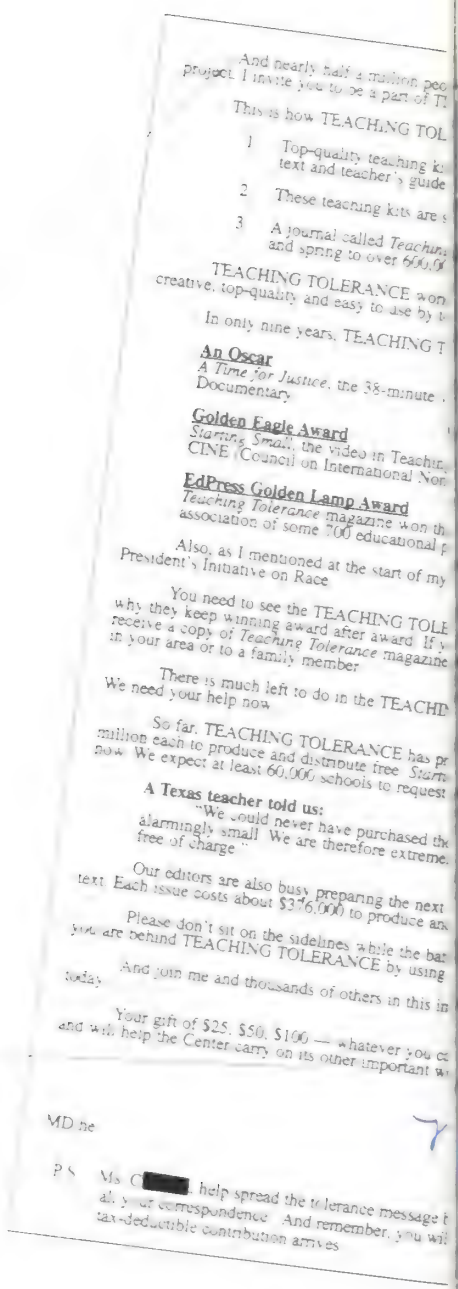
Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery and quickly
les of Harvard and groups like the National Education

No faith healing or infomercial would be complete without a moving testimonial. The student from whose tears this white schoolteacher learned her lesson is identified only as a child of color. "Which race," we are assured, "does not matter." Not apparently does the specific nature of "the racist acts directed at him," nor the race of his schoolyard tormentors. All that matters, in fact, is the race of the teacher and those expiating tears. "I wept with him, feeling for once, the depth of his hurt," she confides. "His tears washed away the film that had distorted my white perspective of the world." Scales fallen from her eyes, what action does this schoolteacher propose? What Gandhi-like disobedience will she undertake in order to "reach real peace in the world"? She doesn't say but instead speaks vaguely of acting out against "the pain." In the age of Oprah and Clinton, empathy—or the confession thereof—is an end in itself.

Any good salesman knows that a product's "value" is a highly mutable quality with little relation to actual worth, and Morris Dees—who made millions hawking, by direct mail, such humble commodities as birthday cakes, cookbooks (including *Favorite Recipes of American Home Economics Teachers*), tractor seat cushions, rat poison, and, in exchange for a mailing list containing 700,000 names, presidential candidate George McGovern—is nothing if not a good salesman. So good in fact that in 1998 the Direct Marketing Association inducted him into its Hall of Fame. "I learned everything I know about hustling from the Baptist Church," Dees has said. "Spending Sundays on those hard benches listening to the preacher pitch salvation—why, it was like getting a Ph.D. in selling." Here, Dr. Dees (the letter's nominal author) masterfully transforms, with a mere flourish of hyperbole, an education kit available "at cost" for $30 on the SPLC website into "a $325 value."

This is one of the only places in this letter where specific races are mentioned. Elsewhere, Dees and his copywriters, deploying an arsenal of passive verbs and vague abstractions, have sanitized the usually divisive issue of race of its more disturbing elements—such as angry black people—and for good reason: most SPLC donors are white. Thus, instead of concrete civil rights issues like housing discrimination and racial profiling, we get "communities seething with racial violence." Instead of racially biased federal sentencing laws, or the disparity between poor predominantly black schools and affluent white ones, or the violence against illegals along the Mexican border, the SPLC gives us "intolerance against those who are different," turning bigotry into a color blind, equal opportunity sin. It's reassuring to know that "Caucasians" are no more and no less guilty of this sin than African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics. In the eyes of Morris Dees, we're all sinners, all victims, and all potential contributors.

Silverstein is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine *and the author of* Private Warriors, *an investigation of the arms trade published last August by Verso.*



And nearly half a million peo
project. I invite you to be a part of Th

This is how TEACHING TOL

1 Top-quality teaching ki
text and teacher's guide

2 These teaching kits are s

3 A journal called *Teachin*
and spring to over 600,0

TEACHING TOLERANCE won
creative, top-quality and easy to use by t

In only nine years, TEACHING T

An Oscar
A Time for Justice, the 38-minute
Documentary

Golden Eagle Award
Starting Small, the video in Teachin
CINE (Council on International Non

EdPress Golden Lamp Award
Teaching Tolerance magazine won th
association of some 700 educational p

Also, as I mentioned at the start of my
President's Initiative on Race.

You need to see the TEACHING TOLE
why they keep winning award after award. If y
receive a copy of *Teaching Tolerance* magazine
in your area or to a family member.

There is much left to do in the TEACHI
We need your help now.

So far, TEACHING TOLERANCE has pr
million each to produce and distribute free *Start*
now. We expect at least 60,000 schools to request

A Texas teacher told us:
"We could never have purchased th
alarmingly small. We are therefore extreme
free of charge."

Our editors are also busy preparing the next
text. Each issue costs about $376,000 to produce an

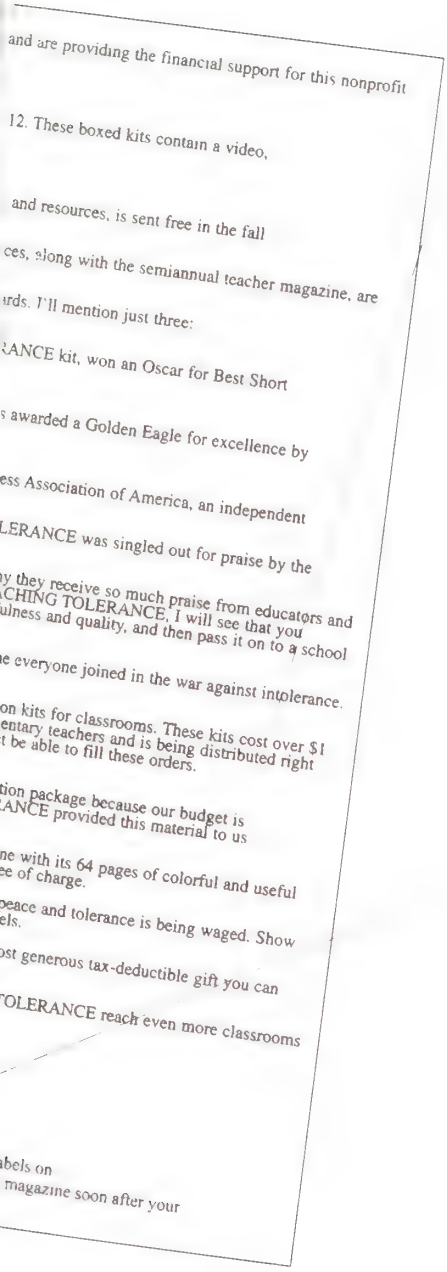
Please don't sit on the sidelines while the bat
you are behind TEACHING TOLERANCE by using
today. And join me and thousands of others in this in

Your gift of $25, $50, $100 — whatever you c
and will help the Center carry on its other important w

MD:he

P.S. Ms. C[redacted] help spread the tolerance message t
all your correspondence. And remember, you wi
tax-deductible contribution arrives.

contributors to Teaching Tolerance might be surprised to learn how little of the SPLC's reported educational spending actually goes to education. In response to lobbying by charities, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants in 1987 began allowing nonprofits to count part of their fund-raising costs as "educational" so long as their solicitations contained an informational component. On average, the SPLC classifies an estimated 47 percent of the fund-raising letters that it sends out every year as educational, including many that do little more than instruct potential donors on the many evils of "militant right-wing extremists" and the many splendid virtues of Morris Dees. According to tax documents, of the $10.8 million in educational spending the SPLC reported in 1999, $4 million went to solicitations. Another $2.4 million paid for stamps.



and are providing the financial support for this nonprofit

12. These boxed kits contain a video,

and resources, is sent free in the fall

ces, along with the semiannual teacher magazine, are

rds. I'll mention just three:

RANCE kit, won an Oscar for Best Short

s awarded a Golden Eagle for excellence by

ess Association of America, an independent

LERANCE was singled out for praise by the

y they receive so much praise from educators and
CHING TOLERANCE, I will see that you
ulness and quality, and then pass it on to a school

e everyone joined in the war against intolerance.

on kits for classrooms. These kits cost over $1
entary teachers and is being distributed right
t be able to fill these orders.

tion package because our budget is
ANCE provided this material to us

ne with its 64 pages of colorful and useful
ee of charge.

peace and tolerance is being waged. Show
els.

ost generous tax-deductible gift you can

OLERANCE reach even more classrooms

abels on
magazine soon after your

In the early 1960s, Morris Dees sat on the sidelines honing his direct-marketing skills and practicing law while the civil rights movement engulfed the South. "Morris and I . . . shared the overriding purpose of making a pile of money," recalls Dees's business partner, a lawyer named Millard Fuller (not to be confused with Millard Farmer). "We were not particular about *how* we did it, we just wanted to be independently rich." They were so unparticular, in fact, that in 1961 they defended a man, guilty of beating up a journalist covering the Freedom Riders, whose legal fees were paid by the Klan. ("I felt the prayers of a Black person for the first time," Dees later wrote of the case. "I vowed then and there that nobody would ever again doubt where I stood.") In 1965, Fuller sold out to Dees, donated the money to charity, and later started Habitat for Humanity. Dees bought a 200-acre estate appointed with tennis courts, a pond, and stables, and, in 1971, founded the SPLC, which has compensated itself risen in proportion to fund-raising revenues, from nothing in the early seventies to $275,000 last year. A Web-based survey of salaries paid to the top officers of 1,850 nonprofit groups shows that Dees earned more in 1998 than nearly all of the seventy-eight listed; tens of thousands more than the heads of such groups as the ACLU, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the Children's Defense Fund. The more money the SPLC receives, the less that goes to other civil rights organizations, many of which, including the NAACP, have struggled to stay out of bankruptcy. Dees's compensation alone amounts to one quarter the annual budget of the Atlanta-based Southern Center for Human Rights, which handles several dozen death penalty cases a year. "You are cruel and uncommon," the Southern Center's director, Stephen Bright, wrote in a 1996 letter to Dees, and proceeded to list his "many reasons for thinking so," which included "your failure to respond to the most desperate needs of the poor and powerless despite your millions upon millions, your fund-raising techniques, the fact that you spend so much, accomplish so little, and promote yourself so shamelessly." Soon the SPLC will move into a new, six-story headquarters made with Vermont granite, just across the street from its current headquarters, a building known locally as the Poverty Palace.

ANOTHER FRENCH REVOLUTION

In Marseilles, Europe confronts its North African future

By Jeffrey Tayler



legally and illeg
and now make
roughly a quarte
the city's popula
of 803,000. It is e
mated that every
at least 100,000 i
gal immigrants
whom possibly h
are North Afric
enter France, wh
legally registered f
eigners already nu
ber 3.5 million ou
a population of
million; the to
number of foreigners in the cou
may be as high as 5 or 6 million. F
European statistics reflect a simila
large-scale migratory trend (so
500,000 illegal immigrants slip in
the EU each year) that accelerated
the 1990s with wars breaking out
intensifying in Algeria, southeaste
Turkey, and the Balkans, and w
the opening of borders in countries
the former Soviet bloc. More a
more, France and Europe are findi
themselves confronted with an iss
that parts of the United States
particular the Southwest and the ea
coast Northeast) have been wrestli
with for a long time now: how to ha
dle an upsurge in unwanted, mair
economic refugees while preservi
constitutionally enshrined individu
liberties and human rights.

The influx of people from the So

and Third Worlds has con
cted to the recent and rapid
ht-right wing extremist par
n Germany, Austria, Switzer
Belgium, and Italy, but it was
once in 1972 that the first anti
grant political party appeared—
Front National, founded and led
an-Marie Le Pen and strongest
id Marseilles, if not in it. (Mar
s has traditionally been a bas
of the Left.) Decrying the
nt invasion" of Muslims from
s the sea, Le Pen has blamed
igrants for unemployment,
, drug trafficking, and abuse of
welfare state, among other
s, and accused them of threat
g the "Christian identity" of
ce. In 1995, running on a plat
of a "French France within a
pean Europe" and demanding
mediate expulsion of all illegal
igrants, Le Pen won 15 percent
e vote in the presidential elec
, and the Front captured the ad
istrations of a number of Mar
es's suburbs and neighboring
ns. Since then, he has suffered
acks of his own making, quarrel
with his first lieutenant, Bruno
ret (who left the Front to estab
his own party of similar ideologi
lk, the Mouvement National
ublicain) and losing his seat in
European Parliament after as
ing another politician at a rally.
this has hurt Le Pen's image, but
ill not diminish the anti-immi
t prejudices of his supporters;
he and Mégret together will
ably win 15 percent in elections
e held next year.

lthough few French who consider
nselves moderate or educated will
r to Le Pen and Mégret as any
g other than oats, even if they
e with certain of their views, im
ation is no longer an issue raised
he Far Right alone. During the
ten years more and more politi
s have been speaking out against
igrants (even President Jacques
rac has derided their "odors" and
ses"), the formation of a common
pean policy to stem the tide of il
ls has figured prominently on
ce's agenda since it assumed the
idency of the EU in July, and the
lic backs the tightening of asylum
and naturalization laws.[1] Opinion polls show consistently that a majority of French think there are too many foreigners in the country; colloquially, the word *arabe* has become something close to a slur, evoking larcenous, dark-skinned Muslim freeloaders who demand more and more social benefits from the state as they inundate, pollute, and subvert *la France française*.

Amid the controversy one may discern a fundamental and not unreasonable question: What is France supposed to be? A homogeneous land of Gallic "Christians," as Le Pen would put it, or a torch *d'immigration* welcoming all people who accept the ideals (liberty, equality, fraternity) proclaimed by the French Revolution? If the latter variant is preferable, could it work? Historically, France has been almost exclusively Judeo-Christian (and mainly Catholic)—a fact that has proved critically cohesive in view of the country's many regional rivalries.

Since my years in Morocco, friends of mine, both French and Arab, have put these questions to me, albeit rhetorically, as a means of expressing disgust with North African immigrants or anger at discrimination, but I've now come to Marseilles to reach my own conclusions, for nowhere else in France has the ingress of outsiders had as visible an impact as it has had here. How Marseilles is handling its new arrivals pertains to the rest of Europe as well. The EU is readying itself for change, with plans to expand to include countries of the former Soviet Bloc and possibly even Turkey. Thus, in the next few years, questions of racial, ethnic, and religious diversity will assume greater importance for Europe; they may, in fact, determine the continent's stability, or even its unity. One thing is certain: with 76 million of the planet's 80 million new inhabitants being born each year in Third World countries, and with disparities in wealth increasing between the First and Third

Paris Match's cover image [illegible] titled to the [illegible] backlash that [illegible] Front National [illegible] Depardieu [illegible] conflict between [illegible] Third France, [illegible] Paris Match [illegible] in defiance of [illegible] citizens.

World, Europe [illegible] order will [illegible] come. [illegible]

The sun [illegible] and the wind [illegible] Notre Dame de la Garde [illegible] hollow chants of the [illegible] then the giant bell [illegible] strikes six, the deafening bronze blows of its gong reverberating over the [illegible] ening quarters of the city. Worshippers, mainly working-class French in scuffed shoes and coarse wool sweaters, file out and shove their way through the Arab strollers heading for their cars in the lot below.

From the Arc de Triomphe, which rises against the sky amid the broad and airy Place Jules Guesde, I set out for a walk across the center of Marseilles, passing the sleek glass-and-granite headquarters of the regional administration and weaving my way between joggers in spandex tights and fashionably dressed young men and women immersed in cell-phone conversations. I turn down the two-lane Rue d'Aix and enter a shadowy defile of soot-encrusted five-story buildings, and all at once I am in a different world. Arab men in djellabahs crowd the sidewalks. Narrow-faced youths with curly black hair, who might be from any district of Tangier or Algiers, cycle between pedestrians, ringing their bells and shouting, "*Attention!*" At the corner, a turbaned old man whining a beggar's chant in Arabic sits barefoot on a stained sheet of cardboard, his knees drawn up to his shoulders, his palm extended. Tall African women wearing floral scarves and toting bulging plastic bags talk in Wolof and make their way around Berber women with tattooed chins. Side streets weave away into a warren smelling of grilled chicken and harissa—the immigrant neighborhood of Belsunce, which is, from all appearances, as lively and North African as any quarter of the Casbah in Marrakesh.

Rue d'Aix widens into Cours Belsunce, where Senegalese women recline on blankets spread on the pavement, chatting, their babies lolling on their laps. Farther on, crowds of Arab men with lined cheeks gesticulate and argue. Cours Belsunce cuts through La



projects and in automobile plants. T
time they looked to North Afri
France had just granted citizens of
Algerian territory full civil righ
including the right to live and wo
anywhere in France. Poverty and ov
population prompted hundreds of tho
sands of Algerians to respond to a
recruitment drive and take the boat
Marseilles. Other former French co
nial subjects from Africa, the Mid
East, and Asia would eventually co
as well. By the mid-1970s immigrar
would swell Marseilles from the 19
population of 637,000 to 912,0

The influx of non-Europea
did not cease after 1974, wh
economic recession motivated t
French government to announ
a policy of "zero immigratio
legal foreign residents had t
right to invite their familie
which they did, and then the
were the illegals, who kept co
ing anyway. By the 1980s, for t
first time in France's history, p
marily Arab or African imm
grants were outnumbering Eur
pean arrivals. It is estimated th
about half of the foreigne
living in France tod
are from Africa.

To accommodate the imm
grants while quartering them se
arately from the French, who r
sented them as much as the
needed their labor, Marseill
spilled beyond its tradition
boundaries. From Belsunce th
city grew north, adding what can
to be known as the *quartiers Nor*
or northern districts—immigra
ghettos, really—that spread all th
way to the limestone hills visible fro
Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde. Beset wit
crime, street gangs, drug trading, an
unemployment as high as 45 percen
the *quartiers Nord* now make up abou
a third of Marseilles. They are not fo
casual touring, so I have asked twenty
six-year-old Hafid Benobeidallah, a
Algerian who grew up there, to sho
me around. He has agreed, and offers t
introduce me to friends of his in the ra
group Fresh.

Hafid drives up to my hotel in a re
Renault. He looks hip and relaxed i
jeans and a floppy salt-and-peppe
sweater, a soul patch beneath his low

…ap in front of a cappuccino at a sidewalk café on the Cours Julien, a bustling pedestrian thoroughfare in the heart of Marseilles. Around his chest he wears a…ed leather pouch, and his…ed hair is pulled back in a ponytail. He speaks to me in quiet, fluent French, but he…ands and speak Arabic or French. He…s me that although he and his…ers and sisters were born in Marseilles, Arabic, the language his parents still…at home, is not their most comfortable lan…nch.

As we follow the grimy Boulevard…ard out of the city center and into the *quartiers Nord*, he…ne for his old neighborhood on Rue Felix Pyat, Hafid…s me his story. He was born in a…d…e (now Oum Attor) the Algerian War…Independence (1954–62), his father…ne to Marseilles to take a minimum-…ge job in construction and eventu…y brought the rest of the family over. …e minimum wage sufficed to keep…ard and his five brothers and sisters…t families with incomes below reg…ar level are eligible for welfare and…ner benefits. Hafid has just finished…ocational college, where he earned a…ree in automotive engineering, but…can't find work, and he's considering moving to Paris or Quebec if noth…ng turns up. His car and electronic…uipments he bought with money he…ade doing part-time jobs over the…mmers.

The serried rows of auto-repair shops…nd dingy cafés on Boulevard Nation…give way to a…spaced wilderness of…gh rises towering over public housing…ojects called *HLM*s—an acronym…anding for "moderate-income hous…g" that has become synonymous with…nements and immigrants. In the most…ecrepit *HLM*s the windows of aban…oned apartments have been cemented…ver, but in places the concrete has…en knocked out and smoke is pour…g through the holes. "Squatters," Hafid says. The ground floors of a…e of the high rises are paneled in glass…ainted unevenly in blue or green; tiny…rabic signs announce the ramshackle…emises behind them—mosques.

We enter the neighborhood of…sens. Here there are groups of Arab…nd African youths in baggy jeans and…seball caps standing in the lots be…ween *HLM*s, looking tough and watch…g the traffic. We come upon two…ashed and upturned cars, stripped of…ery exterior part except the wheels. "They looted the cars," Hafid says. "For…n they turn them over after they're done. Or they light them on fire. There's nothing else to do here, there's no work." Furthermore, a Peugeot chassis…hes, burned out and stripped.

We race higher and higher through the *quartiers*, which never deteriorate into the full-blown slums I'm expecting to see (always they look utilitarian and basically inhabitable—if strewn with litter), and finally achieve the summit at Solidarité, a neighborhood of high-rises scattered across rocky land. There's a commotion ahead: a half-dozen helmeted policemen on motorcycles are careening off the main road into an empty lot, heading for a trash container belching smoke and flames. Arab youths are running away into the projects, and the police, circling, are left with no one to apprehend.

The sun breaks free of the clouds, and stark white light washes over the trash and smoke and concrete. We start back down toward Rue Felix Pyat. Hafid calmly explains that the kids *du quartier* ("from the neighborhood") and *d'origine* ("of immigrant background"—most of them are second-generation) quit school early, can't find work, and turn to crime as much to make a living as to kill time, knocking over stores in the city center, mugging pedestrians, or dealing *shit* (marijuana) that they buy off traffickers riding the ferries from North Africa. *Shit* serves both as a source of income and as entertainment. There's nothing to do in the *quartiers*—there are few bars, cafés, or movie theaters—and the welfare money their parents receive goes to feed the family. However, crime has dropped recently, Hafid says, as a result of the heavy policing begun by the current mayor.[2] "The prisons are full, and the meanest characters of the *quartiers* are dead."

But relations remain tense between the French and Africans, or, as Hafid puts it, whites and blacks. "I prefer not to use the word 'French,'" he says. "Most 'French' Marseillais are just Italians or Portuguese who've assimilated, but they're the biggest racists of all. It's better to say 'whites' and 'blacks.'"

[illegible] Arab, white and black, we're b… all in the s…

Back on Rue Felix Pyat, Hafid introduces me to Youssef, a student at the…, a merchant origin. Youssef eyes me with startled hostility, but when Hafid tells him I'm Algerian he lights up and he asks me who my favorite rap artists are. I protest, I confess, knowing nothing at all about the genre. Frowning, he steps back in…

> …will have to talk to the…
>
> He turns and I walk…

Although his father made the pilgrimage to Mecca, Hafid keeps pious concern himself with Islam, and, he says, so do his friends of Muslim background, motivated by the fasting of Ramadan and cell phones instead of the…them than religion. Young women from the *quartiers* follow Islamic custom and tend to stay off the street, but those who venture out must wear head scarves, which in Marseilles are…bids, skullcaps, djellabahs, and three-day beards…tell Arab men from Europeans. But among immigrants Islam survives as a unifier, bonding those from the *quartiers* and distinguishing them from the white French. Mjitis in Marseilles, who likes to get there…p…ur…d Hafid and his friends at Friday prayers, still returning with…ing…I've arranged to speak with Sheikh Abdel Hadi, the…rabbi of the Great Mosque of Marseilles, on a Friday…d December.

The Great Mosque occupies the first floor of what might once have been a hardware store or restaurant. It lacks the…ome…ance of such buildings in Muslim countries: there's no…minaret, the…ue…Arabic and French, is small and unobtrusive; and one-way mirrored windows prevent…ers on the street from looking in…side. I arrive as noon prayers are ending. Worshipers by the dozen are streaming out, adjusting their skullcaps, slipping on their loafers, straightening their jackets. Wearing gray robes and a black-and-white kathyeh, Sheikh Abdel Hadi appears. He is muscular and intense, abrupt, and possessed of…arresting…ful eyes. His diction, the…ed and sonorous Classical Arabic of the Koran, bespeaks erudition, a lifetime of hard study in religious schools,

ramic words bearing the stony resonance of the Sinai and the Commandments, of implacable struggle and exile. His sheikh's rejection of integration runs counter to the basic precept of France's nation-duty policy—that immigrants accept French values and assimilate. Yet his position derives from an inescapable logic: if his followers integrate, they are no longer his flock; they have been conquered and converted. France's present-day policy of assimilation is at root a continuation of the *mission civilisatrice* of colonial days.

If the sheikh rejects integration, it hardly matters: the waning of religion (be it Islam or Christianity) in France portends a future in which race will mean more for North Africans than creed. In fact, it already does.

By reason of geography, restrictive visa regulations, and a policy of selective recruitment that favored the import of Arab labor, immigration from France's former colonies in sub-Saharan Africa has never matched that from North Africa. Black African immigrants account for only around 5 percent of France's foreign population. The Senegalese are the most numerous, followed by an expanding community of Comorians.

I'm having coffee with Nabou Diop, who was born in Senegal but just got her French passport, and her friend Agnes Yameogo, a third-generation girl with Burkina Faso parents. Both are in their twenties and have worked as cooks in Marseilles restaurants near the Old Port. Agnes's apartment, which is painted a sunny yellow and looks out on [illegible] the curtains are stirring with a [illegible] in the warmth of the [illegible]

[illegible] this apartment. [illegible] Agnes [illegible] her, *hélas*, their apartments had [illegible] been rented." She tells me she'd [illegible] sometimes grab their purses when [illegible] coiffeur, as if she were a thief; her [illegible] ers in school tried to discourage [illegible] from pursuing a higher education [illegible] spite her good grades. She gives [illegible] examples. "When I visit Senegal," [illegible] says, clenching her small fists, "I [illegible] European. But when I'm here, I [illegible] black. I can't feel at home, even [illegible] Marseilles, the capital of Africa!"

Agnes pushes her glasses up [illegible] bridge of her nose and seconds Nab[illegible] adding that Africans want to come [illegible] France because they will either "d[illegible] hunger or emigrate—it's not a ques[illegible] of choice. They're not going on v[illegible] tion when they come here." The w[illegible] belongs to the whites, she says. "Wh[illegible] are kings when they visit Africa, [illegible] they grudge blacks the chance to [illegible] their families by working a few year[illegible] France." Although Agnes and N[illegible] have white friends, most of the peo[illegible] with whom they feel at ease are ot[illegible] Africans or Arabs from the *quarti*[illegible] who share their sense of exclusion. [illegible] the television in the corner we see [illegible] faces of newscasters, all white; the [illegible] screen seems to portray an artific[illegible] world from which Blacks have be[illegible] banished, Agnes says, and that must [illegible] by design.

The breeze stirs the curtain ag[illegible] bringing in more warmth. *Le cap*[illegible] *sur Afrique.* The climate of Marsei[illegible] does call to mind northern Afri[illegible] Nabou and Agnes tell me that [illegible] why they chose to live here over P[illegible] or Lyon, but wherever th[illegible] go they are not at home.

The French Ministry of Justi[illegible] within whose purview fall matters [illegible] naturalization, has stated, rather lo[illegible] by their nationality means "belongi[illegible] belonging to a single history, belon[illegible] ing to a single destiny . . . France h[illegible] never refused those who want to join [illegible] community." "Never" is not exac[illegible] the word. The decree of November [illegible] 1945, governing the status of foreig[illegible] ers on French soil has been amend[illegible] some thirty times, with each instan[illegible] making it harder to acquire citizensh[illegible] or become regularized. In 1999 alo[illegible] French maritime authorities captur[illegible] or deported some 10,000 illegals [illegible] many skiffs of stowaways in [illegible]

ers who manage to steal in the so
nedom the backs of trucks or by
ne in the restrooms on trains, or
alking over the borders from Spain
aly. In all, some 150,000 illegals
ent to France each year. Still oth
ust overstay their visas. Foreigners
ght in Marseilles *sans papiers* risk
g arrested, locked up for several
aths in Baumettes Prison, then
ibly expelled by boat through the
veniently located detention cen-
t the port of Arenc. Between 1991
1999 the percentage of those han
ed through Arenc's gates has
ost doubled.

here is no way of knowing for
, of course, but locals in Mar
les put the number of *sans pa*
s at 25,000, though it could
ly be much higher. The *sans*
iers form an easily exploitable
r pool of docile folk who staff
hens, bus tables, drive trucks,
fee shops, scrub floors — who
in short, all the work the
nch no longer want to do, of-
ten as little as half the legal
nimum monthly wage (now set
5,600 francs, or about $740).
sans papiers help proprietors by
ing them the social security tax
t accounts for half the cost of
or, at the same time, by pro
ding employers with an inex-
nsive alternative to lawful hires,
y foster unemployment. How-
er strict the laws and however
idly deportation rates are ris-
, the police expel just enough il
als to appear to be enforcing
law but never so many as to in
fere with the cleaning of streets
the busing of tables. This pro
ses suspicion of collusion — that
iticians in power talk loudly but
little about *immigrés* in order to
id alienating affluent voters (the
d who own restaurants, hotels, and
cking companies, for example), or

*he lost two sons at sea. "I cry for the
known to bait [illegible] and [illegible] in
n North Africa [illegible] that [illegible]
[illegible] boats [illegible] [illegible]
not people [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] inside [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
containers and holds of ships and planes.
he have even fallen from the sky while
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]*

to keep them attending the mosque
(which has always been staunchly
wired) or the liberal candidates of
the port — the electorate their sympa
thies were [illegible] the plight of the

The most exploited [illegible] are
the immigrant youths, who throw away
aboard boats setting sail from Algiers,
Oran, and Casablanca. Numbering
around 300 at any given time in Mar
seilles, they gather in public parks and
open squares, where their visibility pro
tects them from police beatings and
robbery. Some hitchhike overland to



further points in France or to other EU countries. Many work in the jobs described above, but quite a few deal drugs, sell their bodies, or steal to survive.

At the Marseilles Palace of Justice courthouse I meet Amed Charaabi, a social worker employed by an association called Jeunes Errants. Jeunes Errants was [illegible] 1995 to aid minors [illegible] whom were escaping the [illegible] Algeria but who now tend [illegible] from Sidi Bernoussi, Moulay Sherift, and Ain Oberdi [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] minors to [illegible] courthouse [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [



[illegible] stood us up, and
[illegible] and walk around
[illegible] awesome, it use[d] to be the po-
station.") The kids named it down")
[illegible] the tall [illegible] buildings where
[illegible] live, we walk past it to the
[illegible]. Here is [illegible] and an ex-
[illegible] of glass—someone has thrown a
[illegible] of garbage out of a tenth-floor win-
—and it has landed twenty feet from
We wonder back toward the car,
[illegible] the [illegible] the high-rise's first-floor
[illegible] way—a maddening green gallery of
[illegible] splattered walls and fecal stench,
[illegible] and rubbish, shuttled through by
[illegible] old Berber mummy with white skullcap
[illegible] he passes us I say, "*Salaat aleikum*"
he gives me a dull stare and moves
shuffling through more trash.
[illegible] watch him mount the stairs. Is this
[illegible] that is Berber, who would be so dig-
[illegible] ed on his village, his left his home-
[illegible] [illegible] to step through garbage
[illegible] reckless tenement? Hand shrugs.
Well, the people here are hoping to
[illegible] ve elsewhere. They think this is
[illegible] porary. *I* moved out, after all." But
[illegible] man is old, he may not have time
[illegible] decision to live in this filth screams
[illegible] peration—what despair at home
[illegible] pelled this old man to come here?
We drive off to see Mokhtar, an-
[illegible] er of Hand's friends, in the *HLM* of
[illegible] mpagne-L'Evêque. At the entrance
[illegible] one building we find him, a short
[illegible] lumpy Comorian with manic eyes.
[illegible] e also meet Halim, of Moroccan ori-
[illegible]; Berbali, another Comorian; and
[illegible] ues, a Gypsy. Others come up to us,
[illegible] eeting us with *Wesh?*—slang for
"What's up?" Hand talks privately with
[illegible] okhtar, and I stand with the youths.
[illegible] nes tells me they "steal a little, smoke
[illegible] ittle *shit*, hang out, and have a good
[illegible] me—that's all." They're all second
[illegible] neration; they know little of their
[illegible] ents' homelands and care less; what
[illegible] unts is that they are from the
urtiers, of immigrant origin. They
[illegible] e France nothing ("We didn't ask to
[illegible] born here"); they no longer go to
[illegible] ool ("Why should we?") For the
[illegible] nch we're just Arabs, we're vandals,
[illegible] [illegible] one will give us work"). When
[illegible] atrol of policemen roars by on mo-
[illegible] cycles, the kids shout, "*Les enculés!*"
[illegible] d jump inside to hide. But the police
[illegible] r by, leaving a wake of exhaust drift-
[illegible] [illegible] away, and eventually the kids
[illegible] me back out.

Later we return to the center to spend the evening at Le Balthazar listening to rap. At Le Balthazar, teens—Arabs, Africans, and a few French—drink cheap beer in blue hi-murk and dance to the rumble-and-slash beat of NTM (*Nique Ta Mère*—"Fuck Your Mother") played by the DJ, Cash, a young Frenchman dressed in gangsta getup.

The kids in the *quartiers* have embraced black American culture and American rappers are idolized; their thumping verse of protest suits the anger of the second generation. Generational problems are growing: defiance and anger conflict with the bread-and-faith ideals of the first generation, but gangsta rap is winning out, eroding the old ways. One can imagine a time when the second generation will resent the illegals sneaking off boats and bringing with them the Third World, "immigrant" ways of the casbahs and villages.

If the *quartiers Nord* little resemble the working-class or affluent central and southern districts of Marseilles, life there is better than it is in the slums of New York City or Washington, D.C., and this has much to do with the largesse of the French welfare state. It also stems, paradoxically, from the prosperity induced by Euro-oriented policies of fiscal rigor—policies that one day could prompt the dismantling of the welfare state—and from measures introduced by Marseilles's Mayor Gaudin. Gaudin has spent money on the city's infrastructure to attract investment and promote tourism of the cruise-ship and conference-center variety, hitherto almost unknown in Marseilles, he has begun a policy of matching private investment with state funds. This has brought about some modest successes, or so the numbers (and many white French) say, reducing unemployment by 3 percent, reversing Marseilles's twenty-five-year-long drop in population, and increasing tax revenues. Gaudin's first deputy, Renaud Muselier, after explaining to me his government's chief accomplishment—"halting the spiral of decline"—launches into a proud explanation of what clearly matters the most to him: his city's growing attractiveness to multinationals, its expanding music industry, and its role in the "New Economy." When I ask what he [illegible] says the [illegible] economy will [illegible] to remain there. "[illegible]

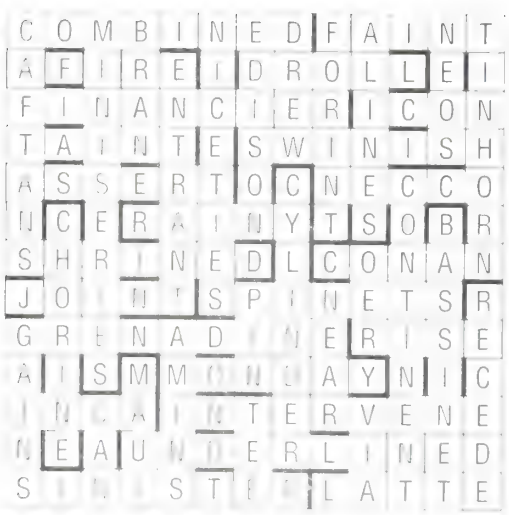
The [illegible] catering [illegible] the new prosperity [illegible] who else is. Even this minimal prosperity, however, [illegible] pull more and more [illegible] showing up on Cours Belsunce [illegible] to better their lives. Yet [illegible] public spending that may [illegible] if France and Europe [illegible] creating an economy [illegible] compete with the United States [illegible] at least in the short run [illegible] plight of the *quartiers* [illegible] welfare funds and bringing about American-style disparities of income.

May 1 is Labor Day in Europe. The local Committee for the Unemployed has told me that the [illegible] of Marseilles will be marching down La Canebière in the May Day parade to demand regularization. It is the Left, including the Committee, that has taken up the cause of the [illegible] organizing them in marches and protests, agitating for their regularization, and opposing their deportation.

A warm, shifting breeze is delivering off the Mediterranean, soughing through the plane trees on La Canebière. The turnout for the parade is small—only [illegible] I see [illegible] bored-looking marching band playing what sound like Salvation Army tunes, the [illegible] [illegible] the slow rum of yesteryear. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

THE BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

O



grant rights, or one right, accord
to their banner the right of the m
to vote in local elections. Where
Cancún to cuts through Cours
since they pass chez pas of M
and Algerians, who ignore them.

Disappointed by the absence of
papiers (not to mention the anach
tistic character of the marché), I br
way round and head down to the jetty of
Old Port, where crowds of young N
Africans are out and about enjoy
the sun. They are safe in their numb
there are too many of them for the
lice to bother checking papers.

In the faces of these North Afric
is the change coming to Europe. T
have arrived as part of a migrat
that, like exoduses of ancient day
taking place outside the control of
or the pale of law; it is a migrat
prompted by imbalances and ineq
ities grown too widespread, deep,
complex to rectify, at least anyt
soon. Colonizer and colonized are
versing roles, but it is France th
benefiting the most, drawing its
mer subjects out of their failed ho
lands and profiting from their ene
youth, and low-cost labor, grow
richer from their vibrant cultu
France is becoming, for the first t
in its history, and against its wil
true *terre d'immigration* for peoples of
races. However distressing ma
French find this transformation,
whatever problems and discomfort
parties are suffering along the way
confluence of demographic and e
nomic factors on both sides of t
Mediterranean ensures that it will c
tinue, as certainly as the disparities
tween the First and Third Worlds
increase and multiply.

French the end of the quays and h
The disparities between the two ca
on either shore of the Mediterran
may eventually bring about a new
namic, a dynamic of rage and desti
tion on one side and sated arroga
and hunger on the other. If this h
pens, egalitarian ideals may be a lu
ry even France will not be able to affo

But that is conjecture; for now, th
is sun, there is wind. From its per
high above the city, the gilded stat
of the Virgin Mary atop Notre-Dam
de-La-Garde is splintering shards
sunlight into the cute I draw in de
breaths of air blowing fresh from t
Mediterranean, then head back to t
jungle to catch the last of the K
dish songs.

A LINE TO WALK ON

The art of a graceful exit

By Arthur Miller

He was possibly the most
andsome man I've ever
n but somehow too intelli-
nt to be thought of as ugly
thick, black pompadour
rte I just above his heavy
brows and left half an inch
orehead, his hair stuck out
rizontally from the sides of
head, and thickets of hair
ed his ears. Minutes after
wing, his cheeks were blue
h sprouting stubble. With
brief neck he seemed to be
ssed down by this dense
d of hair, which gave him
aspect of perhaps a beaver
a prairie dog or some large,
orderly bird. He was short
sides and sort of bundled
nself along down the street,
nched and in a rolling hur-
usually with somebody's
nuscript under his arm, its
eased pages almost falling
t from under his elbow. He
de a living inventing jokes that he
d to the few remaining vaudevil-
ns and the radio stars like Jack
nny, Phil Silvers, Henny Young-
n, and, before all, Fred Allen, his
st customer. He of course hated
lton Berle, who stole jokes without
ying and was fatuous besides, taste-
s'v pretending to be arguing with
s mother up in one of the boxes



overhanging the stage. It made no difference that the woman in the box actually was his mother, at least some of the time. Barry still thought him basically ungenuine, maybe exploitative, and not to be enjoyed by a civilized person. "He doesn't entertain, he robs laughs off you," he once said in one of his riffs wherein he denounced that Berle with his unforgivable larceny, was what was wrong with America in general. Sometimes I thought he believed that Berle, for both the country would not have gone to the endless Depression. With [illegible] he would mutter in a profundo, hornlike voice as he [illegible]

tumbling down a chute, "I never going to die. He will outlast the Washington Monument, the pyramids. He will greet the Messiah when He comes. Because God has no taste, He preserves Berle." In this vein he could hold court in the Whelan's drugstore on the corner of Broadway and Forty-seventh, if I recall, or it could have been Forty-fifth. I'm no longer sure after more than sixty-two years. Young actors and ambitious, unproduced young playwrights would look for Barry in Whelan's and sit around one of the four white, marble-topped tables they had there, trying to hustle a meal with this old man who somehow knew more about plays, directing, and acting than anybody. He would occasionally deign to read a script and opinionate on it negatively for the most part but usually offering small rays of hope. "You got three great lines here," he would say as he riffled with black fingernails through 120 or so pages in search of the gems. "Here you are! In these lines you got truth, the rest is mostly language. Language is danger with a New York audience, which only cracks can waken from their undetected death. And don't be repentitious; only O'Neill has the license. O'Neill, if you didn't get it the first time he gives you three or four more shots. But he's no model for you. And stay away from Max Anderson altogether unless you like writing with a

Arthur Miller is the author of numerous plays, including Death of a Salesman *and* The Crucible. *Echoes Down the Corridor, a collection of his writings, will be published in August. His essay "On Broadway" appeared in the March 1999 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

himself up and asked, "Sir? Wh
blank?!" In the end, Sol got pr
close to his lines, close enough
juice up the other actors' alertn
But he never again tried acting.

looking at Ozymandias during the barbers' strike," an oblique reference to his hirsute kingship among the

Fred Allen, for whom Burry occasionally did some writing, once tried to use him as an actor on his weekly as comically frightening on radio as a skidding ambulance, suggested a pos- his little company of funny, quickly contrast to Allen's rather rural, nasal delivery. But in rehearsal, surprisingly, Burry kept stumbling over his lines and couldn't remember them twice in the same way. Allen understood, of course, that Sol was a *tumler*, a rapid-fire talker who was inspired, much get this right or there'll be confusion. Just read the script, please." They tried it again, and again Burry failed his lines accurately.

"What is it, Sol? What's happen-

last.

Burry struggled for a moment to

top for half an hour.

Allen with a

Burry, finally, got to Allen,

with it, don't go West . . ." Even this

might be quietly talkin

r, revolu-

t, what do you

this

they

n

humself up and asked, "Sir? Wh
blank?!" In the end, Sol got pr
close to his lines, close enough
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"What is it, Sol? What's happen-

last.

Burry struggled for a moment to

top for half an hour.

Allen with a

Burry, finally, got to Allen,

had sold some material to a picture in Seward. He ... it over, and went over one after ... to check it out. At his Whe ... talk on his return to ... marched his spoils to the table ... cared. "Newark?" We all wanted ... is anger to dissipate quickly, to ... explain. "The goal comes out, ... ers, tested high heels, not stood ... the works, comes down the ... ay and starts the grind. No sm... ... one takes, just boom! ... He ... ffs back and forth like she's ... y a locomotive. Then she slows ... n, the house is silvamine—she's ... dy, wonna go something?' Art is ... ne horizon' Aristophanes on the ... h! She reaches in between her ... to her privates and thinks her ... ffle finger out to the Lalooners and ... 'Share it amongst y'all.' The ... se comes down, the Lalooners ... eters, comptometer men sprawl in ... lisles."

... was short for Solon, Solon ... y. His family must have had ... education to have given him a ... like that, but he claimed never ... ave finished high school, unlike ... wits, who taught in a Queens ... school. Nevertheless, there was ... n a sprinkling of classical refer... ... s in his rants. "The Greeks," he ... denly announced one day as he ... d out Whelan's window at the ... ating July crowd passing on ... dway, "the Greeks were a lot ... er than anybody thinks. Those ... s are all murder, rape, and sexual ... edation. They picked up shit and ... d and made poetry. Today we ... shit and blood and turn it into ... and blood with a camera close ... nd somebody's byline on it."

... n another vagrant afternoon, ... three or four young playwrights ... nd him, he gave wisdom, his ... lyses of one or another of our ... s we had given him to critique. ... ry." ... I no longer recall the ... e's name, but in a few years he ... one of the highest-paid screen... ... ers in Hollywood. "You keep ... pping from story point to story ... t, you got too much story, slow ... own, examine your consequences ... e. We are in the theater to hear ... hearts beat with brand new ... wledge, not to get surprised by ... some stupid fool slowly exposing ... With words he meets pretension ... on the street we're either run ... mouth in the belly, or they're stone ... A play is a wedding, and there's ... something unlovable even in a ... swelling that hurts; every great scene ... leads to a pause, two or three good ... carried pauses can stab to the heart ... and make you hit. Any schmuck can ... make a story, but look at Chekhov, ... he doesn't even have one. And look ... at *Hamlet*: one of the most pre... dictable stories ever told. But these ... authors were masters of reflection, ... when you close in on the mystery it ... flips the mind into reflection, not ... the anxiety of melodrama. Words on ... the stage are expensive, think of it ... like every word you write you gotta ... put a quarter in a jar.

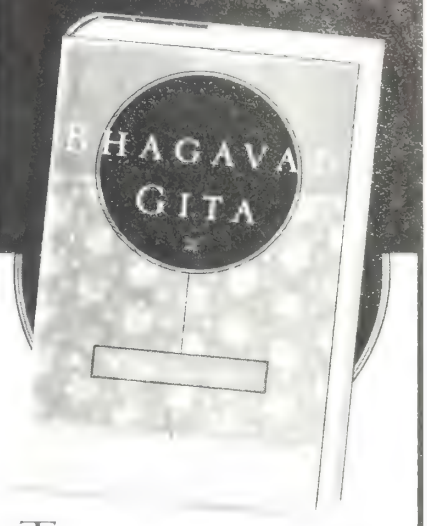
"In fact, to the discredit of story ... originality in the great ages of play... writing. Shakespeare robbed every... thing from history books and other ... guys' plays back to Terence; Aeschy... lus, Euripides, Sophocles—name an ... original story from any of them, your ... mind goes blank. Variations on a ... well-known theme is the name of ... the game. No wasting time making ... up stories. They went for the meat in ... the mystery of the human being. Go ... downtown to the courthouse some ... time. Crooks and lawyers, not partic... ularly talented people, are making up ... stories from nine to five every day of ... the week, but light up the mystery, ... and you're in a whole other line of ... work."

He had all but hypnotized Lindsay ... and Crouse; the authors of *Life with ... Father*, probably the most successful ... and successful comedy of the era, ... armed with his flights and foibles ... notions, they urged Ham to try writ... ing a play and gave him much encour... agement, but for most of a year he procrastinat... ed, knowing better than anybody ... that entering a play and writing one ... were for most people unrelated tal... ents. Finally he wrote a play about ... one of his clients, the late Ed ... Raglan, the greatest of all vaudevil... lians, who in his view deserved ... comparison with Moliere's reported ... great ... and inventive but ... ironies. Sol's manner underwent ... change. His exclamations ... he listened to ... much

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and romantic black raincoat reached to the ground.

And now suddenly, as the hopping out of the sky, came very tall, robust, I-hardish-tel wearing a beam green plaid sui luce rose checks, a well-wish s with a tie of orange hue, and a of deep self-appreciation. He st there with both bemused hands t ed over his stomach, as satisfied rabbi who has just done a dou wedding; it seemed from the plea in his fat face that for some re he was, in effect, awaiting applau would soon realize this was He Youngman, who was however, a would for the rest of his long life the very edge of real stardom of Jack Benny–Red Skelton kind any case, unlike several of the ot present, he was always or at least quently working and so I rec had already coined his logo l "Take my wife . . ."

Now as I was to this milieu, innocent of its customs, it took s minutes to realize that what m be called a situation of some ten had arisen with Youngman's pre tous entry. The same sun was s ing on all of them, but Youngm with his fair hair and face, seer golden now, glistening. It was only the sun but his having b working on a national netw rather than in a club or on st and if he had not yet passed thro the Republic's inner golden doo public love and acceptance he seem lately to be thrusting a across the magical threshold it l up to the knee.

All I knew, however, was that his arrival, the others, half a gen tion younger, went swiftly int weird mode of evasiveness tow the new arrival. One kept up an aggeratedly motionless, wide-e staring at the pavement, oth launched into fingernail inspecti of one finger at a time along w studied skyward seams, all the w exchanging brief glances amo them that bordered on bottled laughter. Why? It was beyond And now I noticed that Burry s to speak, stirring in his depths.

I knew him well enough now sense when some terrible remark

ing its way up from far below
in the group continued, but the
ings were oddly absentminded
and dry, unseriously prettied
rks chewed on vacantly like
dry, old pastries. And the more
their inventions the more un-
d was the expectancy in those
es directed toward Burry, who,
all, had been their common
d, their wit and rule, the imagi-
ve source from which all of
n, from time to time, had sipped.
his was when I remembered an-
such conclave of some months
er when Burry had parted from a
up with some notable remark,
forgotten—what he described to
later as "a line to walk on." One
to have a line to walk on, you
dn't simply wave to a group and
"See ya" or "Take care." Given a
st e chique, the unspoken code
wed that they might all disband
melt away if they did so together,
a man departing alone from a
extant group had to be propelled
line of at least some distinction
sk having done that exit. In this
, Youngman had somehow, with
o word spoken, set himself up for
hallenge by the whole irregularly
sloved cohort as he stood there in
expensive, wild suit as green as
s and idiotic tie, his bemused im-
s, and the teeming self-satisfaction
his upholstered-back-arching man-
of standing there with that un-
ibled smile on his face.

Like sun bursting through fog, the
ment had come. Sol, who hap-
ed to be standing next to Young-
n, reached over and just barely
ched the sleeve of the green plaid
and asked, "Is this real, Henny?"
e crowd held its breath. Burry had
vered his line to walk on, and it
s unanswerable, implying several
ults at once that garish as it was
suit might easily be a clownish
ge costume Youngman had decid-
to wear in the street, possibly in
er to get civilians to ask him if he
s in show business; even worse,
t the taste the suit revealed was
ilar to that in Youngman's hu
r; and finally that it was time for
gathering to break up, to flee in
the sheer menace of this green
nd, which was on a par with Mil
ton Berle's act and no longer tolera-
ble to behold.

Youngman's mouth began to open
like a trapper mid-blizzard, but
nothing came out. A universal sigh
seemed to emanate from the company,
and the tension was gone; they
had prevailed. And before anyone
could stop him or top him, Burry was
laboring his hunched way down the
street. The group disintegrated into
the phone booths but not without
politely offering farewells to Young-
man, who, as was customary at such
moments, affected to have noticed
no put-down, no ripple in the
smooth flow of a successful
afternoon.

I was not finished with Youngman, though it took six decades for us to meet again, if only figuratively. An interviewer had asked, among other questions, if I watched television, and I said I didn't very much, because it was so rarely funny. It needed comedians, I thought. And who in my opinion was funny, the interviewer asked. Without thinking, I said, "Henny Youngman." The man was greatly surprised. "Why Henny Youngman?"

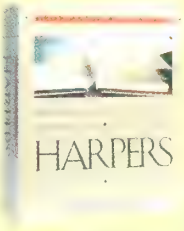
As it happened I had been on an airline flight only the day before and had listened through earphones to a comedy tape, and there was Youngman saying, "My wife and I had an argument. She wanted a new fur coat and I wanted to buy a car. So we compromised. We bought the coat and hung it in the garage." I thought of Burry then—some sixty years after our sidewalk conclave—and wondered whether even he could have resisted giving that one at least a grin.

A couple of weeks after the interview was published I received a cutting from *Daily Variety*. It had printed I signed "Henny Youngman," which quoted my praise of him and ended, "Thank you, Arthur Miller. I promise never to play Willy Loman." He died not long after, in his nineties. The last I knew of Burry, he had married and retired. I stopped hanging out at Whelan's and hardly saw him anymore. But I do regret never having dared to tell him that I thought Youngman, God help us, was funny. ■

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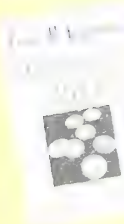
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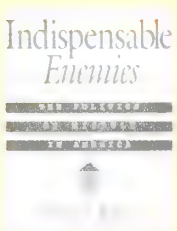
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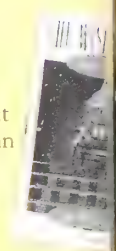
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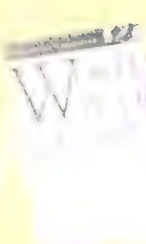
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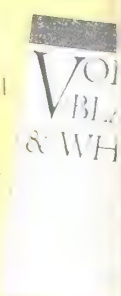
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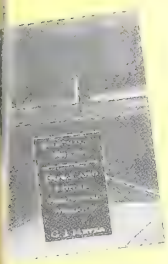
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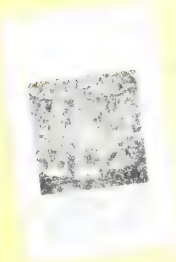
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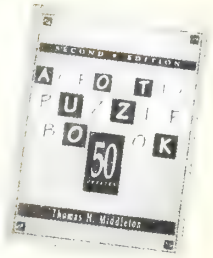
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A new book doesn't prove what the CIA thinks it proves about the agency's performance at the end of the Cold War

By Melvin A. Goodman

no doubt that we could have of
architect of a colossal state in
nation's history and that as tal
does—indeed, that we relied t
new stage coming at all.

The blame for this failure mu
be laid in large part at the fee
Central Intelligence Agen
Throughout the Cold War, n
American institution was so cl
identified with the struggle to m
ter and contain Soviet influenc
activity around the world. W
American agents were rest
Shah of Iran to the Peacock Th
in the 1950s, organizing an inv
of Cuba in the 1960s, and app
the Reagan Doctrine in An
Nicaragua, and Afghanistan in
1980s, their real target was the
et Union. Yet prior to the Soviet
lapse, the CIA, despite the age
intense and decades-long preoc
tion with Moscow, provided
strategic warning to U.S. policy
ers that the Kremlin was chan
and that our relationship with R
would never be the same.

Former CIA director Stans
Turner called this absence of st
gic warning the greatest corpo
failure in the agency's history.
cost of the blunder to the U
States was enormous. It include
huge (unnecessarily huge, as
subsequently learned) defense
gets of the Reagan-Bush years,
the resulting expansion of
deficit; a prolonged confronta
with Moscow that delayed
agreements and conflict resoluti
the Third World; and a squand
opportunity to influence deve
ments in the Russian Federation.

Rather than face its mistake,
Langley, the CIA has b
struggling ever since to convince
American public that it did give
decisionmakers adequate warn
Several years ago, the CIA com
sioned and provided the docum
for a case study at Harvard Univ
ty's John F. Kennedy School of G
ernment, concluding that the ag
had been right on the Soviet
lapse. Last November, the age

nsored a three-day conference
xas A&M's Center for Presi
al Studies, part of the George
School of Government and
Service, on "U.S. Intelligence
the End of the Cold War," con
ously declining to invite figures
to be critical of the CIA's
record. It then released a compi
of twenty-four newly declassi
National Intelligence Estimates
SNIE) and intelligence
oranda, entitled *At
War's End: US Intelli
on the Soviet Union and
n Europe, 1989–1991*,
monstrate that policy-
rs were warned of the
ction of events . . . in
oviet Union."

t best, this process—
staging of the confer-
and the subsequent
ication of the book—
been an exercise in
deception, at worst, it
been simply an act of
ption. I was one of the
ncy's Soviet analysts
ng the 1980s, and I
e away from my years
with a far more de-
sing—and, I believe,
rate—view of our per-
mance than the one put
ward at Texas A&M
as not invited to give
ssessment at the con-
nce.)

he great irony here is
At Cold War's End it-
provides a fairly accu-
picture of the CIA's
rd on Russia, but only
n we know how to read
ssigning the various es-
ates their place within
developing chronology of events
the period with which the book
oncerned. *At Cold War's End* is
ntially a grand experiment in de-
textualization, comprising a
ll group of carefully chosen docu-
ts culled from a vast field of in-



telligence gathered and produced during the final years of the Cold War. What these documents reveal is that the agency failed to chart the decline of the Soviet Union and was dead wrong on the three most important intelligence questions of our time: Was Mikhail Gorbachev serious about reforming the Soviet Union and ending the Cold War? What was the extent of the defense burden on the Soviet economy? And what was the Soviet military threat to U.S. interests? The documents reveal that the CIA, created [illegible] for the express purpose of tracking trends abroad, provided no timely warning of either Moscow's retreat from involvements outside its borders or its violent [illegible]. Had the agency done so, U.S. policymakers might have reacted constructively. Instead, the CIA warned of a Soviet crisis and [illegible]

intelligence [illegible]
knowledge [illegible]

The introduction, written by CIA [illegible] Graham Fuller, explains the rationale for predicting the "implosion" of the Soviet empire. In this, Fuller has much company. The truth: Yes, the CIA did foresee "strategic implications" of political and military changes in Eastern Europe, but only *after* the anti-Communist revolutions in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The CIA held that the Warsaw Pact was "essentially dead," but only *after* the Eastern European revolutions. The view that Gorbachev's "credibility has sunk to near zero" was expressed only after Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze had resigned in December 1990, warning that the nation was threatened by dictatorship. Other key developments demonstrating Soviet weakness were mentioned only after they took place. These included Moscow's capitulation on German reunification, the strategic retreat from the Third World, withdrawal from Afghanistan, withdrawal from Central Europe, and the political transformation of the Soviet Union itself. In fact, the implosion was not impending—it had long since happened.

The CIA's chief historian, Gerald K. Haines, states in the [illegible] to *At Cold War's End* that the release of these documents represents "new evidence of the CIA's commitment to openness," but anyone familiar with the agency's protocol on Russia and the Soviet Union in the late eighties and early nineties will be able to tell by glancing at the table of contents that this claim is questionable at best. The CIA's most important series of intelligence estimates from this period was entitled

National Intelligence Estimates are the assessments on international issues CIA analysts are primarily responsible for drafting. Estimates and their underlying projections are developed within the intelligence community and then delivered to U.S. policymakers.

change in the Kremlin, though
Soviets had signed the Intermed
Range Nuclear Forces Treat
INF, which called for the destru
of both American and Soviet s
piles of intermediate-range
shorter-range missiles), annou
force withdrawals from Centra
rope and the Third World, calle
an end to chemical weapons pr
tion, and supported a compreher
ban on nuclear testing. In spi
considerable evidence of Sovie
tentions, the CIA gave no war
of Soviet withdrawal from the r
bases at Cam Ranh Bay in Viet
the Indian Ocean, the Med
ranean, or the littoral state
Africa. Instead, agency estimates
dicted the deployment of weap
that were never manufactured
falsely credited the Soviets
matching or exceeding "NATO"
pabilities in nearly every m
ground forces' weapons category.

In November of 1989, despite
political and economic turbule
then ongoing in the Soviet U
and Eastern Europe, the CIA
dicted that Soviet general purp
forces would field "new weapon
virtually every type through
end of the century." Even when
agency acknowledged the imp
tance of the unilateral reductio
Soviet forces, it concluded that
Russians' real motivation lay in
"potential for slowing NATO's m
ernization," rather than in the
rect savings expected from the
lateral force cuts" — in other wo
that the reductions were an atte
to get NATO to lower its guard.
now know, of course, that the S
sians were rapidly going broke

In an effort, no doubt, to obsc
the fact that the agency h
grossly underestimated the m
tary burden on the Soviet econo
Watch contains only
intelligence assessment of the So
economic situation per se. In the
1980s, CIA estimates dramatic
overstated the size of the Sov
economy, claiming that it was ne
percent that of the U.S. econo
Even growth rates began to be
ported fully in the mid-1982s, l
according to the Soviets themsel

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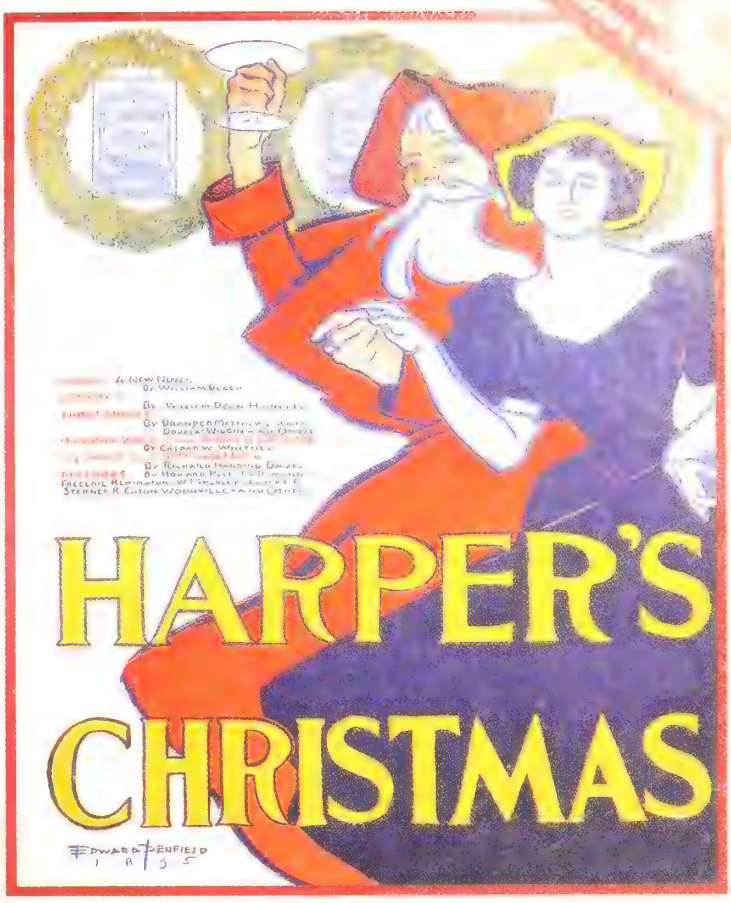
This year marks the sesquicentennial of *Harper's Magazine*–the nation's oldest monthly magazine–and in honor of the occasion, e editors have published a magnificent 712-page, hly illustrated volume of the best writing from the agazine's pages. For 15 decades of uninterrupted blication, *Harper's* has explored the American perience with a fiercely independent spirit and ectacular writing. Now that experience is available *An American Album: One Hundred and Fifty Years Harper's Magazine*.

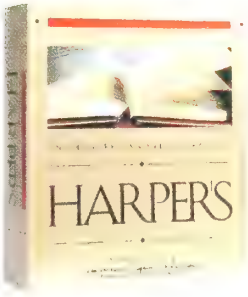
he Table of Contents is stunning in its range: erman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, Willa ather, Eudora Welty, John Cheever, Philip Roth, hn Updike, Norman Mailer, David Mamet, Annie illard, and Tom Wolfe–and scores of other writers d artists who have made an indelible impression n America's literary history.

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n American Album features a foreword by historian rthur M. Schlesinger Jr., as well as a 15-page introuction and history of the magazine by editor Lewis H. Lapham. Lavishly illustrated, the grand volume is eautifully printed on acid-free paper with smythewn binding for lasting brilliance.

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Edward Penfield's "Christmas" poster, created to promote the December 1895 issue of Harper's Magazine. Penfield (1866-1925) was one of America's most highly influential illustrators and poster artists, widely credited with bringing abstraction to commercial art through boldly simplified shapes. An eight-page full color portfolio of his promotional posters for Harper's is featured in An American Album.

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burden of military spending on the

allow for increased military procure-

but dismissed out of hand the Krem-
lin's increased emphasis on defense
alone, an emphasis that was highly
inconvenient to the hypertrophied

in military). Without warning,

lopments are nowhere to be

ied on the agency's per-

keeping the Penta-

assessments of the

trated on providing fodder for the

which was published an-
nually from 1981 to 1991 as part of
the Reagan Administration's cam-
paign to justify increased defense
spending. *Soviet Military Power* con-
sistently overstated Soviet military
capabilities in order to gain congres-
sional authorization for desired mili-
tary programs (a conclusion reached
in a 1993 General Accounting Of-
fice assessment). These "inaccura-
cies" are particularly worrisome be-
cause the Pentagon presumably is
relying on the CIA's worst-case as-
sessments of the situations in China,
Iraq, Pakistan, North Korea, and
other "hot spots" as it currently
preparing its Quadrennial Defense
Review, a statement that will shape
budgets and the structure of our
armed forces for the next four years.

The most serious blunder com-
mitted by the CIA between
1988 and 1991 took place in
Afghanistan, where director
William Casey encouraged Afghan
insurgents to make harassing raids
into Soviet territory. Casey was
committed to a protracted war in
Afghanistan, and, not surprisingly,
his analysts obtusely rejected
Moscow's announcement, made in
February 1988, that it planned to
withdraw from the country. It was
not until March 1988, a month after

that the CIA
believed Moscow
made a firm decision to withdraw
from Afghanistan. Still, CIA
analysts, including Robert Gates and
Vincent Cannistraro, argued that the Soviets would not
pull out. As it happened, this with-
drawal marked the beginning of
Moscow's strategic retreat and set
the stage for anti-Communist revo-

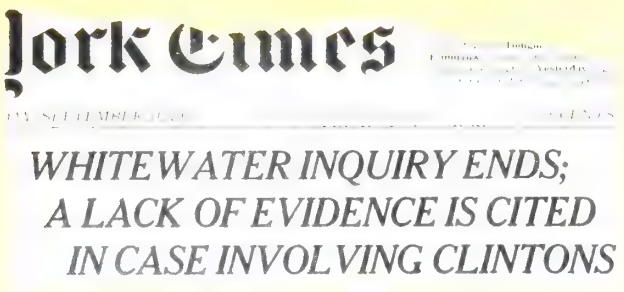
Despite having observed months of
tendentious policy debates within
the Kremlin, the agency made no
mention of Soviet policy toward re-

unification, let alone the reu
tion itself. In this way, the
completely missed the politica
olution in Central Europe, arg
the greatest victory of political
ism in modern history.

Despite signs of anti-Soviet
Czechoslovakia, Hungary,
Poland, the CIA—in May 19
saw no "unraveling of Moscow's
European empire" and no "di
ished military threat posed b
Warsaw Pact." The "Berlin
will stay," according to an est
issued the year before the wall's
lapse, "whatever tactical advan
Gorbachev might see in it
moval." And the agency went
predict that, if necessary,
bachev would sponsor a "crack
to preserve Soviet influence."
after the collapse of every Co
nist regime in Eastern Europe
CIA refused to change its a
ments of Soviet influence in th
gion. An estimate issued in
1990 maintained that the S
Union's "size, geographical pro
ty, security concerns, raw mate
and market will continue to ma
a major factor in Eastern Eur
None of the agency's estimates
suggested that the successful Ea
European revolutions of 1989 w
weaken the Soviet Union and
to increased demands for more
tic and comprehensive S
change as well.

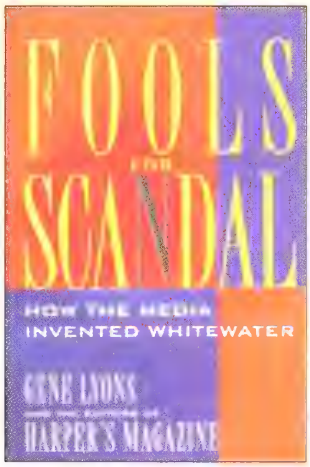
In fact, the agency misse
boat on virtually every key pol
trend of the Gorbachev era, b
ning with the significance of h
cession to power in 1985, the
orthodox appointment of Ed
Shevardnadze (a man with no ti
the foreign-policy establishmen
foreign minister, and the com
ment of the new leaders to en
military standoff that had def
the post–World War II era. CI
timates provided no warning
the Gorbachev agenda was des
to end the competition betwee
superpowers and, as late as De
ber 1988, argued that Moscow
determined "not to let the We
fect the fundamental nature o
Soviet system or its superpowe
tus." Gorbachev's agenda ha
tracted strong opposition in 1

READ THE BOOK THAT WAS FOUR YEARS AHEAD OF THE *New York Times*.


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A LACK OF EVIDENCE IS CITED
IN CASE INVOLVING CLINTONS

AND FIND OUT WHY SO MUCH OF WHAT WE'RE TOLD IN THE NEWS IS SO OFTEN WRONG.



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–New York Times Book Review



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as the increased power of the conservatives led to "new men" in the party leadership: Boris Pugo, Vladimir Kryuchkov, and Anatoly Lukyanov. The CIA estimated that these new leaders "made Gorbachev's position

along with Defense Minister Yazov, who led the coup against Gorbachev in August 1991.

observers of the Russian scene could anticipate the disarray within the

for U.S. policymakers. When the die

than a layman watching television," up to events with worst-case analyses that were deeply wrong. In April

estimate predicted the "most signifi-

T

the CIA line was that the ch wouldn't really make a difference

There is much to be lea from *At Cold War's E* and it is perhaps unfort that so few ordinary citizens likely to read it. The volume i vertently demonstrates the way which intelligence products ca tailored to conform to political ion or to the White House age And given how wide of the m the agency was on the So Union, the book provides a us narrative of intelligence errors. what is most disturbing about highly selective compilation is it suggests how little the agenc self has learned from its mishand of Soviet events. When the Se Select Committee on Intellig held hearings on this issue in 19 was asked to testify. I described politicization of intelligence occurred during Casey's ten including estimates that skewed to undermine Shultz's ef to improve relations with Mos Little that I have seen from agency since has led me to bel that things have changed in a damental way.

If, in the future, the CIA wi to avoid mistakes like the on made when the Cold War was ing, playing games with the in gence record is not a good wa start. Unfortunately, the agency' timate in 1999 on the ballistic sile threat to the United St which has become a rationale fo national missile defense system, cates that the agency still pr worst-case analysis to clear thin and has put the nation's strategi telligence at the service of a poli agenda. Last year, the Senate de ed ratification of the Compreher Test Ban Treaty in part because Director George Tenet decided agency would not be able to v that other nations were compl with the ban. The sudden inab to monitor a treaty is chilling t mony to the continued politiza of the CIA, as was the agency's s sion, in the age of glasnost, to pu this incomplete, deceitful, and haps even dangerous book.

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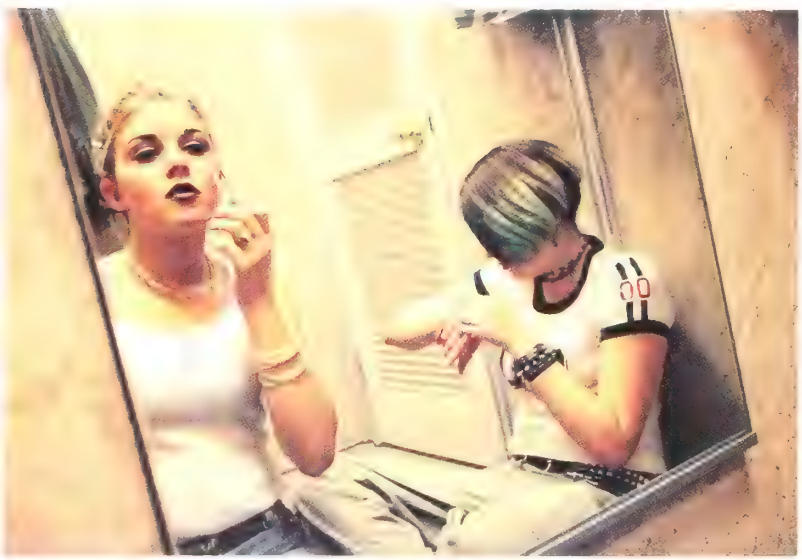
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MAKE A WISH

By Elizabeth Tippens



but because wears a navel and cropped sweaters, it too forever to make simple observa That's someth I've noticed he Level 2. It a girl kets herself as by wearing a ring, for instance telegraphs her belief in the at tiveness of her s ach, there will big time before ity hits the eye o beholder. It u does.

The store manager, a short, w woman named Robin, has no ma ing strategy for herself. What she have is a lack of personal style. outfits are anti personal, like so body's boxy, generic uniform, pa along apathetically from one emp cc to the next. Robin is a cropp misfit who believes in misguided techniques she invents herself, "Disco sells clothes." Does this m that disco makes customers more clined to buy, or that with disco l mernet at our brains we are more clined to sell? The answer, everything else lately, lies in realm of Divine Mystery.

I heard somebody say, Burn t disco. Disco tastes, Burn, baby, bur plays over and over. "An endless of disco madness," Bailey calls it.

Robin puts Bailey and me up t to sell coats.

Who could have guessed th

ctually excel at something
rs." My ability to sell coats
one crashing out of nowhere,
e like, and has nothing to do
my previously known talent
e, or with my actual person-
which is what you would call
ated. It all happens in a kind
ce. While this new, outgoing
thing girl works the floor, I
disappear altogether. Later,
my impressively high sales
thed, I have no clear memory
at I could have said that was
uasive and convincing. It's a
With disco.

Mother and I just bought the ex-
sions. One night, right be-
was about to fall asleep, I re-
er saying this. Apparently I
anything at all to sell a coat
to be a genius at the moth-
ghter double-sale.

a lot of coats.

president of the company
me a congratulatory letter,
leaves me, and even Bailey,
speechless in its pathetic en-
sm.

I's, you can't even make fun
mething this banal," says
Bailey.

I win a prize.

r lunch I insist on eating the
same thing every day. I very
very sweet wedge of cheese
ch, and an extra-tall cup of cof-
th extra cream and sugar. I get
nish and coffee in the food
at a small store called Alpen-

to get their German-Swiss-
ian-whatever theme across to
ne last mall customer who
have missed it, Alpenhaus has
a dwarf to parade back and
outside its entrance wearing an
haus sandwich board, lederhos-
nd a little green Alpine hiking
With a feather. And I have to
y this reeking medieval indig-
order to get my Danish and
But this is how badly I want
anish and coffee. It is my one
nly pleasure of the day, and
I actually do care that it is
ing and unhealthy and causes
rense sugar-caffeine rush-crash.
hat I have to witness human
debasement in order to get it. I feel physically incapable of ordering anything else.

Once I have made it past the dwarf, a racket you can't believe. I get to see the boy behind the counter. I find his hostility refreshing after a morning of being "JOI" to the general public. I find it baby-like, Sprite. His ears, his eyebrows, and his nose are all pierced. He will be the one to inflict the pain here, NOT YOU. He is the boy who hates everything. He is a little younger than me, and very tall, with big feet and hands, like a puppy. He acts bored and tired, and he speaks softly, forcing the customers to crane their necks to hear what he is saying. But the boy who hates everything likes me. It's the kind of acknowledgment you shouldn't feel honored by, but you do anyway. We have a mental crush on each other, which you can actually feel the purity of. Each day we have a brief yet satisfying conversation.

"Will you be dining in today," he asks.

Together we eye the dining conditions. One sticky plastic table and two metal folding chairs.

"I believe I'll be dining *out* today," I answer.

This portion of my daily routine is what you would call a highlight.

The mall is a space station. Day. No night. A synthetic habitat of regulated, piped-in weather. I eat on a white bench by a fake pond with a fountain that drips down onto copper lily pads. If someone sits down beside me on the bench while I am eating my cheese Danish and drinking my coffee, my lunch is ruined.

I listen to the persistent sound of water hitting copper as it echoes everywhere. It is an open, hollow sound. Children come by with their mothers to throw coins into the fountain.

Make a wish.

After lunch I usually get my cowboy to visit my boots. My [illegible] are beautifully constructed from dark red leather, and not [illegible] would I actually [illegible] with my pathetic paycheck. But the

[illegible]

way. He [illegible] the perch. He [illegible] chunks about the [illegible] are not their [illegible] pound [illegible] picked up [illegible] store, and sang with a scary, forced enthusiasm, alarming if you're not expecting it. Like pep squad. His boots can be obnoxious, but they are so pretty you can overlook it [illegible] days. They [illegible] Happy Trails.

For some strange, [illegible] moment not one customer is in the store.

"Oh, Miss, Miss [illegible] can you help me?" Bailey screams, pulling up her tartan skirt and twirling around in a circle. She's got on men's underwear, the white paisley kind with the blue line around the waistband.

"Whoooooo," she shouts, "you're me while I'm in the sky."

I love her for this.

Later, when the [illegible] is pulled down and Robin is vacuuming in her right ear, I tuck in my [illegible] and Bailey is hard at [illegible] with Hi-Ho Silver and her Walkman on, and I can't remember what I said that made all those women buy all those coats. I [illegible] tired, shy again, more or less who I consider myself to actually be, word-[illegible] this [illegible] into perfect squares and stacking them into neat, flatty piles. [illegible] somehow satisfying to look at a neat stack of things, any things, that are all the exact same color. I [illegible] this tiny study in order and perfection.

Then it's lunch.

"My God, I'm [illegible]," he says.

My lunch, and therefore my entire day, is in danger of being ruined [illegible] big white cowboy hat. Hmmm. I [illegible] come things right. I can't. I know I am, but you have to pretend. That's not like that. You just have to.

"It" [illegible] whatever," I say.

"Are you sure."

"That too."

I've come to [illegible] around the mall, [illegible] the lower levels in his unsullied cowboy boots, lurking notice-

of his glasses, the aviator

I am surprised by how much time
think about things, like, Can this really be happening? Am I really here? I
aware of the darkness of the highway,
road, my car, and me. Driver's ed,
Time to recall a whole summer with friends two years ago, and driving around on the blacktop, bashing into bright orange cones and laughing like maniacs. Take your foot off the brake, I think. Isn't that what you're sup-
spinning stops, and I begin a strange, silent drift, sliding off of the road and onto the ramp's shoulder, where I sit completely unharmed and singing to myself the same song I was singing before the wheels of my mother's old VW Rabbit hit the

"Carrie," they shriek.

I try to get away from them by racks. I keep circling, around and nd, but the little stalkers circle,
tween them, trapped, like bologna.
names. For some reason I think that they must all be named the same thing. Either they are all named Ashley or Amber, or Ashley-Amber
, laughing.
I say.

"Well, that's great."

"You heard that."

softly.

"She didn't die at all," I say almost died. She was sick. Sh cancer. But she recovered w and chemotherapy. She had a r great. She's getting total recon tive surgery, but in the mean and I went shopping for all nothing suits my boss tells me to wear. There's a bikini, a push-up suit, like Now she and my dad are on tion, like a second honeymoo the Caribbean."

"Which island?" asks one girls.

"Ashley," another says, h her.

"St. Barth's," I say.

"Well, that's so great, then," of them says gently. They lik word "great." I remember that much they liked the word "grea

"God, I'm, like, so glad," say

"So, where are you going to college?" It's the same one who which island.

"My parents wanted me away, but I decided to stay hom help them out."

They just stare at me.

"What does that mean?" o them asks. Bailey has me wear among thousands of identical coming shipment of hideous sw to have noticed yet.

"It's like a joke," I say. "Jimi drix."

They all stare at the joke.

"A famous architect," I say. built this mall."

"Great."

go unlock a dressing room."

I back away from them, ca out how great they all look. Ho tally great. And wasn't it great t

and stand in there with my fore resting against the cold smooth

...s goes, and I let myself slide ...st the carpeted wall to the ... Robin is out there, pounding ... door. 'Are you in there?' What ...ng on in there?' I am definitely ...ng too much eye makeup ... mascara and black eyeliner ...y out my eyes and make my ...ook pale. I can no longer seem ... what looks good. As opposed ... it looks bad.

...ed a marketing strategy.

P.S., my skin is breaking out.

...ose my eyes and listen to the ... of drizzling water as it echoes ... the mall. It's like water inside ... When I open my eyes he will ...re.

"...ake up," he says. He's there. ...here.

"...o I look like I'm asleep?" I say.

"...ah, you do," he says. "Sleeping ...ly takes a nap."

... sits down on the bench beside ...

"...you know that it ruins my day ...letely if someone sits down on ...bench while I'm eating my ...?"

"...u call that shit lunch?"

...otice how pointy his snakeskin ... are. He is short, and those hi... ...acked heels give him a slight ... in height, not that cowboy ... on short guys ever really fool ...ne. I notice things I didn't no... ...efore, things you can't notice ... you are bombarded with the ...icture. Or the big hat. Now I ... details, like the small size of ...nds, and the rings. He's got on ... rings. One ring is a cat's face ... tiny rubies for eyes.

"I didn't work here," I tell him, ...pretty sure I wouldn't be hang... ...round on this bench criticizing ... the salespeople eat."

"...n rich," he tells me.

"...," I say.

"..., rich is nothing to sneeze at."

"...o I look like I'm going to ...?"

"...ou could sneeze," he says. ...t's a good name for you, ...cy."

"...hat's amazing," I say, "because ...cy really is my name. See, it says ...ht here on my nametag."

Actually, my nametag is missing again. I keep losing them. Today my nametag says LaShonda Brown, the name of an employee who was fired for having sex in the bathroom at the Food Court. "It may say Sneezy, or it may say Sleeping Beauty," he says.

"Can't you read?" I say.

"No ma'am," he answers. "I can't read or write, but I can pay someone to do it for me. Muhammad Ali said that," he tells me.

"I think Muhammad Ali had dyslexia," I say.

"There's something real special about you," he says.

"I bet you say that to all the girls," I say, taking a large sip of coffee.

"I don't need to say it to all the girls," he says. "I'm saying it to you because I can see you're different."

I am sure this guy is known among the salesgals of this world as one gigantic joke, something to laugh about later with Bailey.

"Can I give you a ride home after work?" he asks.

"Of course," I say. "I'll meet you in the parking lot at nine."

"I'm serious," he says.

"I'm not," I say.

"Why not?"

"First of all, I have my own car," I say. "And besides, my mother says never to take a ride with a stranger."

"Do you always do what Mama says?"

I take the last sips from the bottom of my cup, which is basically crystals of coffee-soaked sugar. In high school I used to drink carrot juice.

"What if you got to know me?" he says.

"You say there are no more real cowboys, right?" I say.

"That's right, darlin'," he says.

"So if there are no more real cowboys, then soon there will be no more pseudo cowboys, right? I mean, who are all the pseudo cowboys going to imitate?"

"Darlin', I'm afraid we're on the very verge of extinction," he says, holding up his small hand and pointing it at me like a gun. He smiles a little, like a smirk. "I'll see you," he says. "You better get it while you can."



After all, you're going to be asking them the most intimate situations imaginable. If you are doing your holiday shopping for that special someone (or someones), trust is even more critical.

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T

"Sellin

t just looking,

ter that's been smeared around

her peace sign earring shake. She

sk-

him, but he's playing with her, too, and it surprises me that she thinks she's the

n

n

n

she rolls it neatly around her hand and stashes it away inside her backpack.

urdays are the busiest days of eek. Sales associates are re- to arrive two hours prior to ng in order to attend various ars with titles like "Sweater g," "Accessorizing," and "Stay- ached." Without Barley to behind Robin and make faces, minutes are in danger of being even the tiniest bit seriously es are already burning from the and fluorescent lighting, and that it is way too early in the ng.

rple is to be referred to as 'Egg- ," Robin says. She is twitchy in ffed high heels, which you can re cheap to start with, shifting eight nervously from one leg to her. "There is no *purple* in this she says. "Got it?"

this 'Sweater Folding' or 'Stay- syched?'" asks a girl named . She is new and takes notes.

sm looks as tired as the rest of eled by nothing more substan- nan coffee and sugar, burning fore our eyes.

ntyhose. Pantyhose," she re- unaware that she is caught up middle of an incoherent rant a pair of pantyhose so dirty will stand up by themselves.

ar tears, Robin says, "Some e don't even have three min- wash out a pair of pantyhose."

hisper to Breck, "It's good to role models."

tside it has begun to snow. I this only because thick hair bushy, thin hair goes flat, and body complains that they have rong kind of hair. *How about a out? How about a new coat on Buon baby buon.*

w it is just me up front, selling to snowed-on women. Cheap, y coats that are not well made, are not anything substantial, nything that is going to last or up. Coats that will lose buttons tays and little tacked-on velvet Coats that will unravel. In my I can see them all unravel.

st night, on my way upstairs to edroom, I passed by my mother's old room. My father doesn't sleep in there anymore. He sleeps downstairs on the couch with all of the lights on. When I looked in, I noticed that white powder from a blue box of hers had spilled all over the bureau and mingled with the dust. I wondered if my father opened the blue box, trying to remember the way she smelled when she was still here, and when she still used those things. From the doorway I could see the glass bottles of perfume. They sat untouched. Other things she threw away in a fit of disgust at things of beauty, at life, at the world, but these she left to turn old and dark from time and heat and too much light.

Robin is clapping her hands in front of my face.

"Wake up," she says.

People keep telling me this.

"It's the busiest day of the week and you're standing around here daydreaming," she says.

I'm looking at Robin, thinking, She has got to stop using brown mascara, because it smudges, and then all it does is make her face look dirty.

"I put you up front to sell coats," she snaps. "Now if you don't want to stand in the back, you better WAKE UP."

"Robin, you need a day off," I tell her.

"I need some salespeople," she says, snapping her fingers at me. "Now, let's wake up and *smell* some coats."

"You mean, sell some coats," I say, correcting her.

"Listen," she tells me, "your sales have gone way downhill lately. You better get it together, girl."

"I don't think you want that coat," I tell a woman whose huge hat hair is wild with static electricity. "It's a total waste of money," I tell her. "The style is over. It will look like a joke next fall."

The woman looks angry, as if she suspects she's being tricked.

"Can't you see it's not well made?" I say. "Can't you see that?"

"Is there a coat in this store you could recommend?" she asks, gesturing sarcastically.

I shake my head no.

"I appreciate your honesty," the

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NOTES IN A BOTTLE

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Robert Winter

November Index Sources

ister.

I feel like, just seeing him, I

Marker. I no longer

rs, I think.

I walk through the big department

I let the women turn their smooth, cool fingers over my eyelids, contouring my eyes, they tell me, with three different shades of beige. I inhale the smell of expensive perfumes. Flowery, lemony, cinnamon smells. I wait in the makeover chair for what could be hours. I wait until the white-coated women look annoyed, then concerned. I wait until a plainclothes security guard (good

Marker. I no longer

Looks like that person is a no-show," he says.

here.

"Guess so," I say.

On my way out to my car I see the dwarf and the boy who hates everything getting high behind a giant orange Dumpster.

In the underground parking lot I hear his voice. It echoes, ricocheting

"Hey, girl, can I give you a ride home?" Bing, bing, bing, and bing, and it's everywhere.

in my car, running my hairbrush

He is in the shadows, behind a

I can't even seem to remember what remember. I rest my forehead on the steering wheel and accidentally

absurd white hat, and I realize joke doesn't have to be funny

"Unlock the door," he through the window.

"Go away," I say.

"Go ahead, unlock the damn

I do. I do this.

He opens the car door, pul hard because it sticks badly. H es a bunch of empty Diet Cok into the back seat and slides side me. He is wearing the wa looking coat I have ever se thick, shearling-lined jacket m soft tan leather, a coat too g ever unravel.

He stretches out in the seat me and blows on his han warmth.

"Sometimes life gives you sh says.

"What are you talking abo say

"You know what I'm talking since you drive this shitty car."

"Does it make you feel supe criticize everything?"

"I want to show you somet he says.

"Like what?" I answer.

"Like my fish," he says. "Eac of my fish is named for a cha on *All My Children*."

"You're a drug dealer," I say.

"You're a little liar," he says.

"I really did work at the store," I say, "but I changed jo cause they wouldn't let me off when my boyfriend crashed hi torcycle. I lost it and started sc ing at the manager what a he pig he was, and then I stormed the store and never went back."

"What happened to boyfriend?" he asks.

"He died," I say, feeling unex edly satisfied by the sound of it.

"Really?" he asks.

"Yes, really," I say. "He wa incredibly gifted person whos was completely wasted."

"I want to know your real n he says.

"Aren't you missing *All My dren*?" I ask.

"It's Saturday," he says.

"What about weekdays?"

"I tape," he says. "Where's coat at?"

CLASSIFIEDS

s suit," I say. I can see my breath. eah e how cold I am, and that I ver see my coat again because ot is hanging in the locker room back of the store and I have just t that I am never going back. "I y coat in a contest," I say, "a lling contest."

takes off his coat and wraps it I my shoulders. It is heavy and of sheared wool and expensive

on't do drugs," I say.

ll me your name."

ugs bore me. Cocaine is passe ould sell heroin."

I knew your name, I could a fish in your honor."

on't I have to join the cast of *Children*?"

nt to settle into the coat, pull tly around me, give in to its hics liming, but I let it sit, rest- ffly on my back.

u're pretty enough to," he says.

ght," I say.

ou shouldn't be running your- own," he says. "I don't like to ou running yourself down."

s so none of your business what

want to touch your hair," he "Right now, in my mind, I'm ing your hair."

et out of my car," I say.

o you want to see my fish?"

re you high or just insane?"

one of the above," he says, ing toward me. "Now, go ahead ake my hand."

lash of silver rings, of ruby cat's

ahead, take it."

ach to turn the key in the ignı- but he grabs my wrist and pulls ward him.

et out of my car," I say.

our teeth are chattering," he "You're shaking all over."

gathers the coat by its lapels ulls me, wrapped up in it, to- him.

n so, there is still time to put a o stupid compliments and all of st of it, none of which makes sense in the world. I know I still get out of the car. I could I could walk, I could run, be- his mouth becomes the only uth in the world. ■

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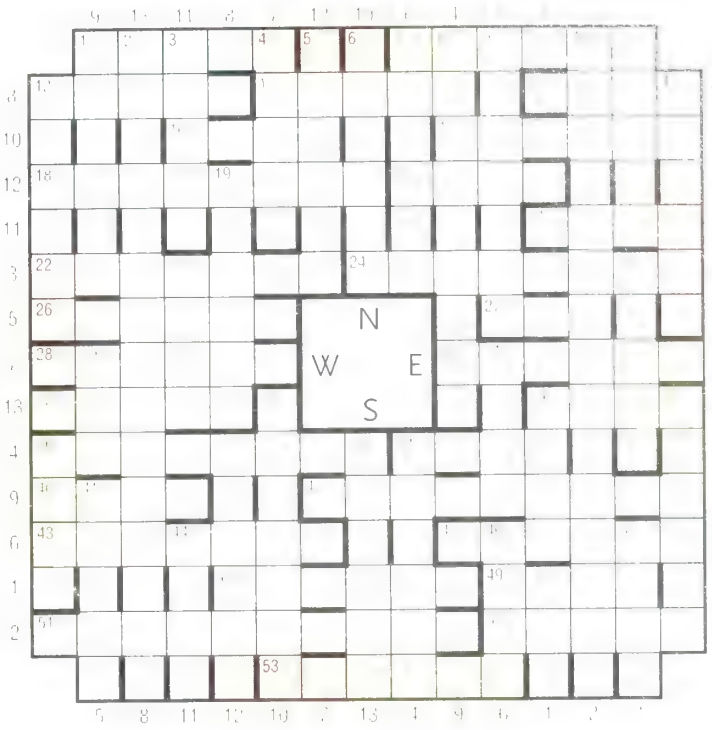
By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

The preamble sets out the diagram to represent a deck of cards arranged in four hands by suit (spades = ♠, hearts = ♥, diamonds = ♦, clubs = ♣), red and below, following usual stanton code:

A=Ace, J=Jack, Q=Eight, K=Five, O=Two, X=Ten, D=Four, E=Seven, R=Four, Q=Queen, N=Nine, S=Six, F=Three.

Fill the diagram, then play a hand of hearts (the numbers on the periphery show the order of tricks). Ignore the two leads. The best card player takes the trick and makes the next lead. A player who cannot follow suit can discard. Scoring: each heart among 13 players' tricks = 1, queen of spades = 13, each set of diamonds = 10. High score wins.

Indicate final scores and the winning player. Answers may take eight proper names, two foreign words, and a number spellings at 21A and 39D. 14A is uncommon. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 66.



Across

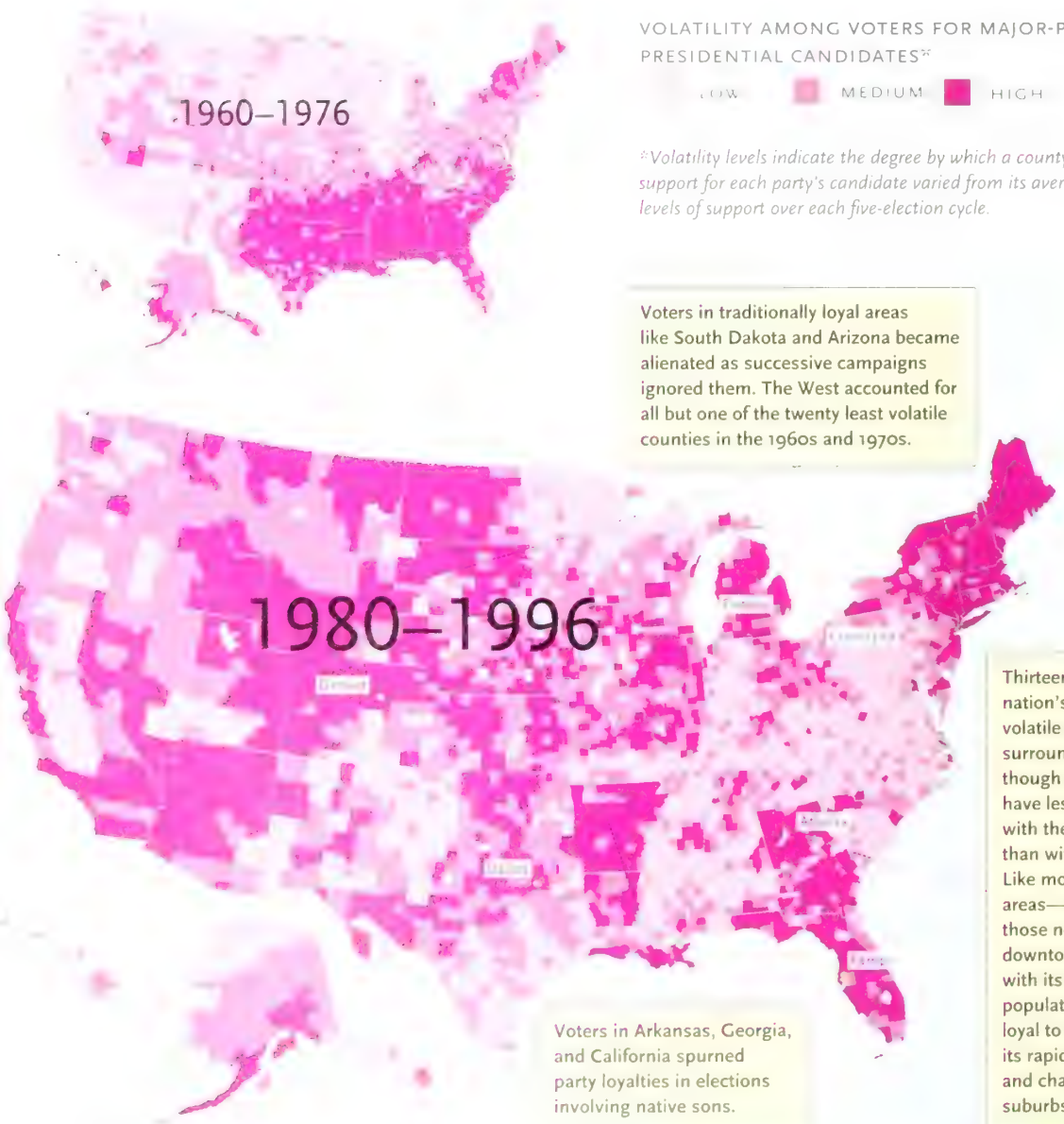
1 Quark I recorded is a deviation (5)
7 Quotes out of context: "The restaurant's tops!" (6)
12 School paint to get rulers (5)
13 Usual suspect among certain parties (5)
14 Bottlewarm, African plant? (11) (4)
16 Faceless, ill-defined medical condition (4)
17 Drunk caused results at Interchange set D & 41L (6)
18 Engineer Lee talks about the transaxel (5)
20 Down sick, I'm in a pickle (4)
21 Big Bird tills them euphemistically (4)
22 Meal at Exeter on the 4th set lady likes a man (7)
24 Mid-east shipbreakement takes you when it's light (5)
26 More promising royal basket-maker (6)
27 Person who's second in turn at audition (3)
28 Sea creatures and flounders get the lead out (6)
30 Sloppy, unkind, boring pest (6)
32 Jughead gets sick from coolers (5)
34 Went down to hear a number from Pat, perhaps (4)
36 It's useful not running a goose (5)
39 Discuss you get from a speller (4)
40 In the Escapetone, I'm rotten (4)
42 One taken in by a soul in a fallen state (9)
43 Comes and whips an automaton's team (7)
45 Two sets of sums (6)
48 Male Scot *Hibernia* jewelry (6)
49 Hide and Seek starts clumsily (4)
51 Joltin' Joe praised pretty pusses (5)
52. Transferred from Tokyo to here? (5)
53 Ladies I got in with Gertrude, Opal chi e.g. (6)

Down

1 One who goes to meetings in Aspen, perhaps (6)
2 Pad [illegible] (4)
3 Where [illegible] (5)
4 Start to end and [illegible] (5)
5 Heavy [illegible] (6)
6 Cuckoo [illegible] (5)
7 *Ice* [illegible] (4)
8 Cotton [illegible] (9)
9 Expert in mother [illegible] (5)
10 Dance [illegible] (6)
11 Upper [illegible] (5)
12. Zany twit hugs holy man (6)
15 [illegible] (6)
19 [illegible] (6)
20 [illegible] (4)
23 [illegible] (5)
29 [illegible] (5)
31 [illegible] (4)
33 [illegible] (4)
34 [illegible] (5)
35 [illegible] (5)
38 Stabber died. Bother (4)
37 [illegible] (5)
38 [illegible] (5)
39 [illegible] (5)
41 [illegible] (5)
44 [illegible] (5)
46 [illegible] (5)
47. [illegible] (5)
50 [illegible] (5)

Contest Rules: [illegible]

PARTY POOPERS



VOLATILITY AMONG VOTERS FOR MAJOR-PARTY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES*

LOW MEDIUM HIGH

*Volatility levels indicate the degree by which a county's support for each party's candidate varied from its average levels of support over each five-election cycle.

Voters in traditionally loyal areas like South Dakota and Arizona became alienated as successive campaigns ignored them. The West accounted for all but one of the twenty least volatile counties in the 1960s and 1970s.

Voters in Arkansas, Georgia, and California spurned party loyalties in elections involving native sons.

Thirteen of the nation's twenty most volatile counties surround Atlanta, though the reasons have less to do with the old South than with the new. Like most urban areas—including those noted at left—downtown Atlanta, with its stagnating population, remained loyal to parties, while its rapidly growing—and changing—suburbs did not.

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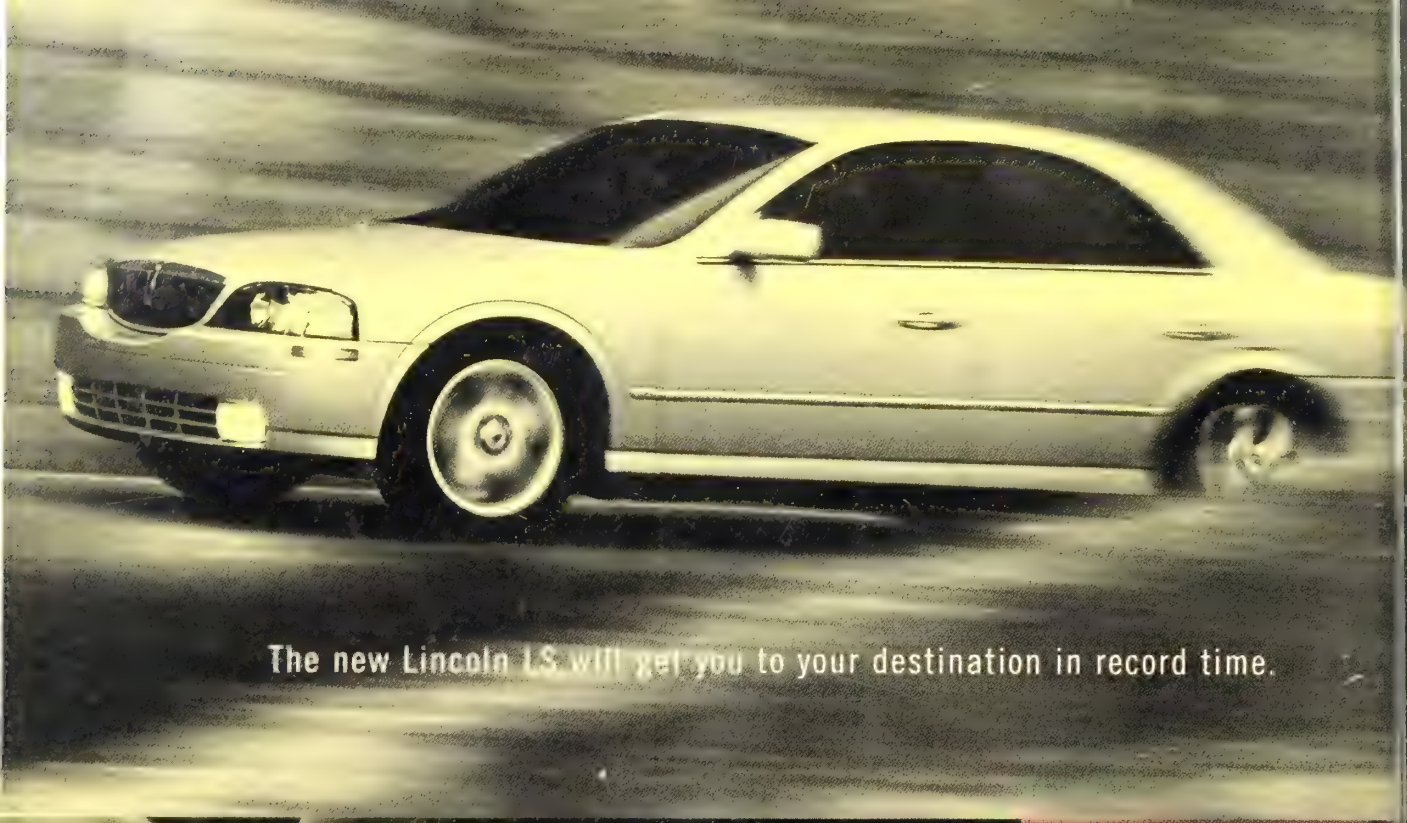
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HARPER'S



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◆

MIRACULOUS FISHING

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A BRAVE OLD WORLD

Looking Forward to a Nineteenth-Century Utopia

By Russell Jacoby

THE FUTURE JOURNAL

A story by J. Robert Lennon

Also: Peter Reading and Jane Rogers

The Sanctuary That Was Saved.

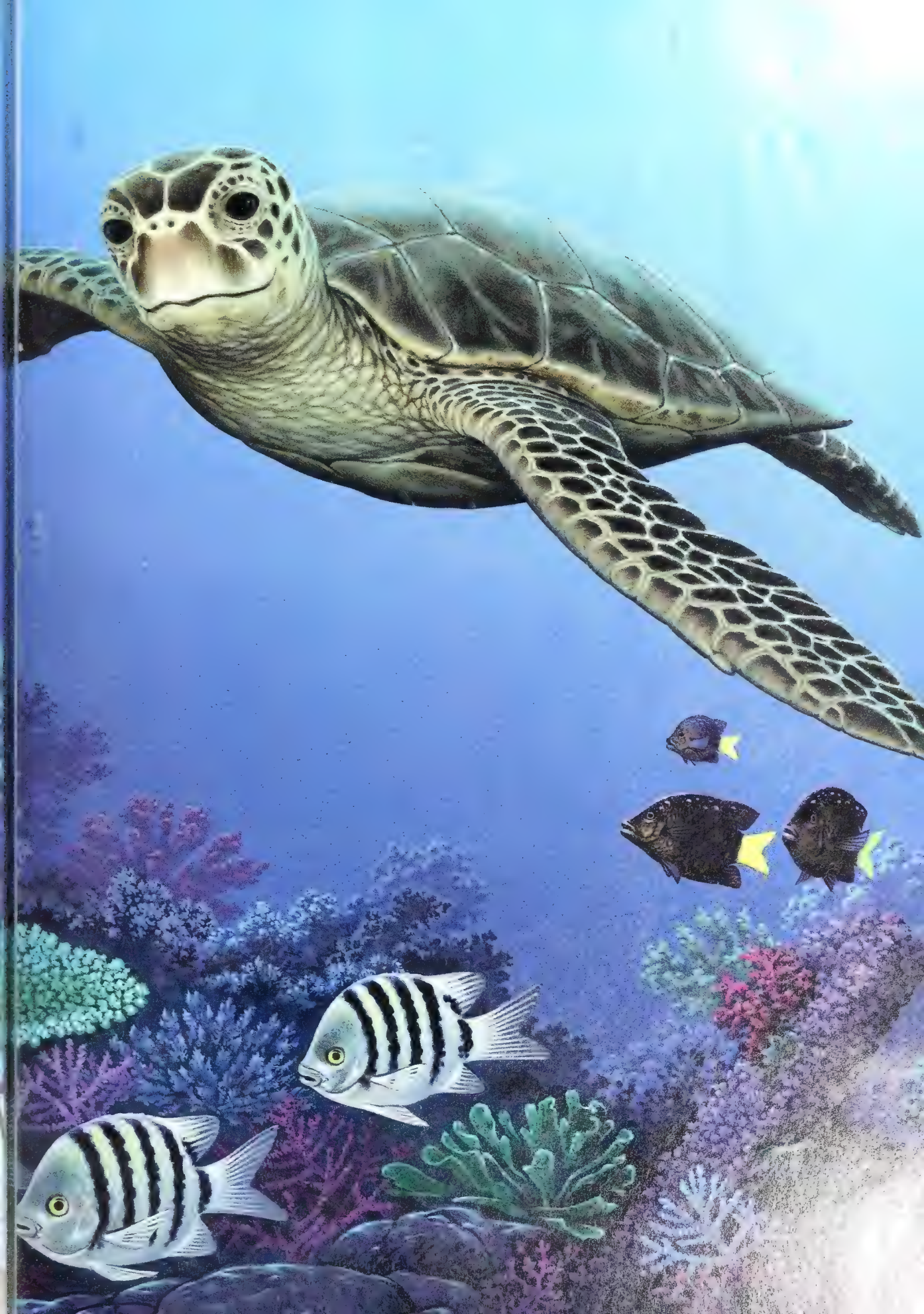
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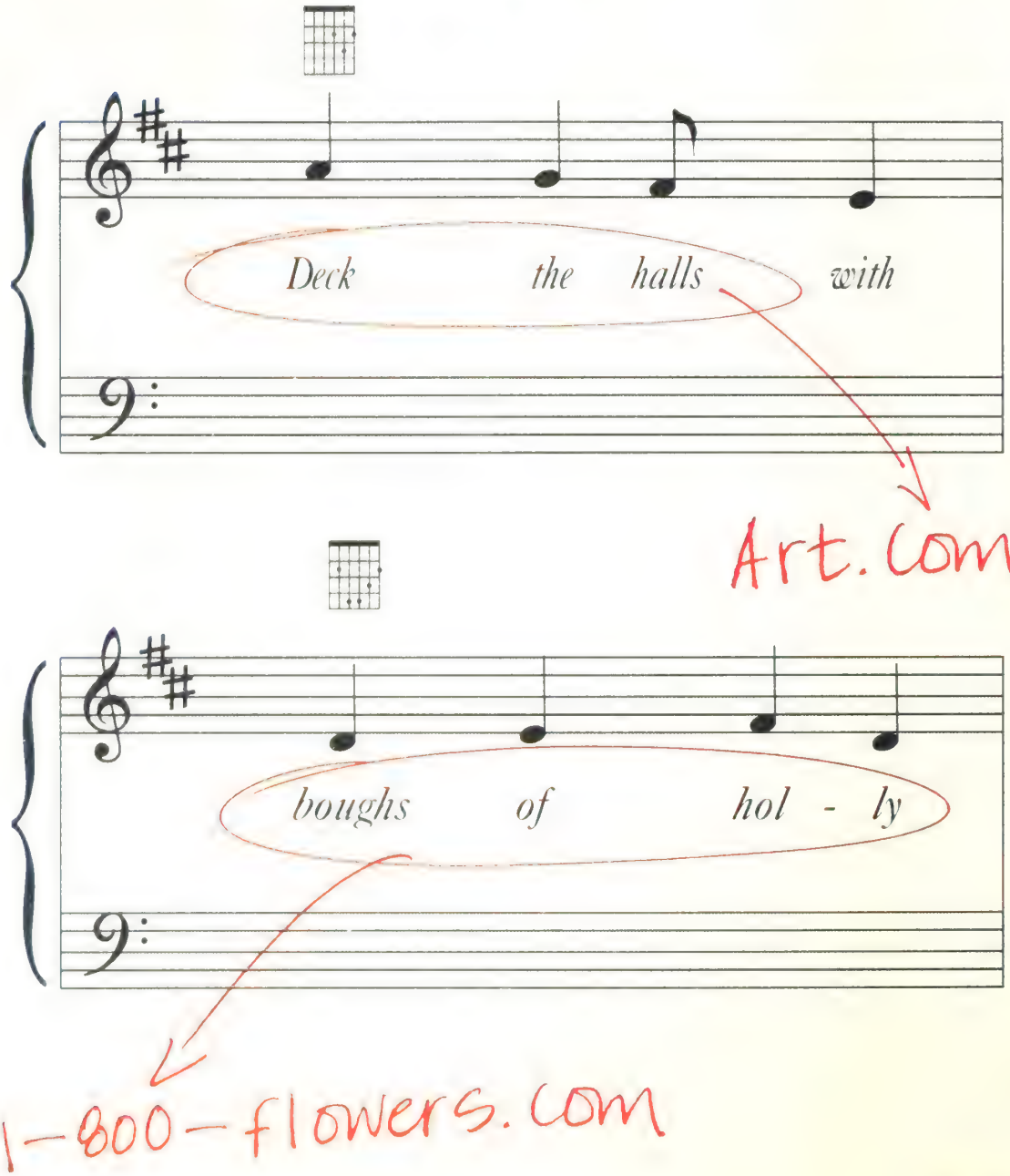
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HARPER'S

LETTERS

Not Just the Chosen

I was saddened to read Leslie Epstein's reflections on the Holocaust ["Pictures at an Extermination," September], because he appears to have fallen victim to the very historical simplifications he sought to clarify. I, too, recently visited Auschwitz and was greatly disturbed by the overrepresentation of Polish suffering and heroism. As Epstein points out, "No citizen of Poland . . . was thrust into Auschwitz simply because he or she was a Pole." Unfortunately, his conclusion that the Holocaust "was committed exclusively against the Jews" denies historical fact. The Sinti and Roma peoples (the "Gypsies") were also targeted on racial grounds and slated for annihilation.

Unlike the Poles, Russians, or Catholics who died in Auschwitz, the Gypsies were not granted "the ultimate luxury: an explanation" but were murdered solely for the "characteristics" of their blood. As with the Jews, pseudo-scientific studies were undertaken in order to declare them *lebensunwertes Leben*, or "lives unworthy of living." Like the Jews, the Sinti and Roma were interned in ghettos, forced to wear [illegible] for identification (in their case, a black or green triangle), and made to elect their own governing councils to aid in the destruction of their people. Adolf Eichmann, who planned the "Final Solution," proposed that the "Gypsy question be solved simultaneously with the Jewish question," paving the way for their deportations to the death camps. Likewise, a Nazi commiss[illegible] instructed the mobile killing squ[illegible] Eastern Europe and Russia to giv[illegible] Gypsies "the same treatment a[illegible] Jews." By war's end, up to 80 perc[illegible] Europe's Sinti and Roma popul[illegible] had been wiped out: the Nazis [illegible] closer to achieving a total genoc[illegible] the Sinti and Roma than of the [illegible] Epstein's claim, then, that the[illegible] were hunted down "with a diff[illegible] degree of thoroughness and inte[illegible] than any other people" is simply u[illegible]

To a large degree, however, Ep[illegible] cannot be blamed for his conclus[illegible] The Sinti and Roma, still margin[illegible] throughout Europe, are vastly u[illegible] represented in most Holocaust s[illegible] arship. No mention of the Sinti[illegible] Roma was ever made at the Nu[illegible] berg trials or in any official contex[illegible] til the trial of Adolf Eichmann in [illegible] At the ceremony commemoratin[illegible] fiftieth anniversary of the liberati[illegible] Auschwitz, many Sinti and Roma [illegible] refused entry and forced to w[illegible] through the barbed-wire fences [illegible] had once imprisoned them.

Surely Epstein did not intend t[illegible] petuate this insult, but his desire t[illegible] fine the Holocaust as a uniquely Je[illegible] experience allows the genocide o[illegible] Sinti and Roma to remain unre[illegible] nized, hiding the true breadth of [illegible] terror. Let the suffering of the Jews [illegible] er be forgotten; let the suffering [illegible] Sinti and Roma finally be rememb[illegible]

Tomaz Jardim
Toronto

[illegible] *mail to Letters*, Harper's [illegible] *Broadway, New York, NY.*

In the middle of Leslie Epstein's [illegible] course over his long-neglected Je[illegible] identity and previous reluctanc[illegible] deal with the Holocaust, he paus[illegible]

...der how history might have been
...ent had Christianity never exist-
...e concludes that the Holocaust
...ld not have occurred. As evidence,
...oints to Asia, where he claims
...not a single Jew was ever "killed
...se he was not a Hindu or Sufi or
... a Turk."
...stem not only fails to mention
...killings connected to Jewish en-
...ment near the tri-continental
...roads (Egypt, Babylon, and the
...an occupation of Palestine); he
...es acts of genocide committed by
...ame Asian groups he names. Mus-
... and Armenians could equally
...n that they would not have suf-
...but Hindus and Turks never exist-
...Even the Sufis, better known for
...peaceful mysticism and dancing,
...ged in military actions against ri-
...slamic groups. The stigmatizing
...extermination of one group by an-
...r is, in screenwriting parlance, an
...tory set on all continents. Jews are
...lone either as victims or as people
... wish to redress wrongs.

...h Goldstein
...adena, Calif.

...e Epstein responds:

...would like to thank Tomaz Jardim
...his letter, which rightly calls our
...ntion to the terrible fate of the
...sies during World War II. I take no
...sure in making distinctions be-
...n any of the peoples who were the
...ims of German fanaticism; our sor-
..., for one ought never to exceed,
...h less obliterate, our sympathy for
...her. It is with a feeling almost of af-
...tion, then, that I must say that ha-
...e toward the Gypsies occupied in
...psyche of the Third Reich and its
...ters nothing like the obsessive and
...self-destructive rage against the
...'s. Himmler sought to exempt the
...Sinti and Lalleri tribes from de-
...ation, and those who had aban-
...ed a nomadic life and taken up a
...d abode often ceased to be the tar-
...of the sort of round-ups and ge-
...logical investigations that Mr.
...im mentions. Moreover, Gypsies
...ried to pure Germans were not as a
...subject to deportation, and those
...o were had to wear the camp badge
...gned to the "asocials," a category
...included beggars, hoboes, pimps,
...stitutes, and anyone else who vio-

The first sound this radio produces is "thank you, thank you, thank you."



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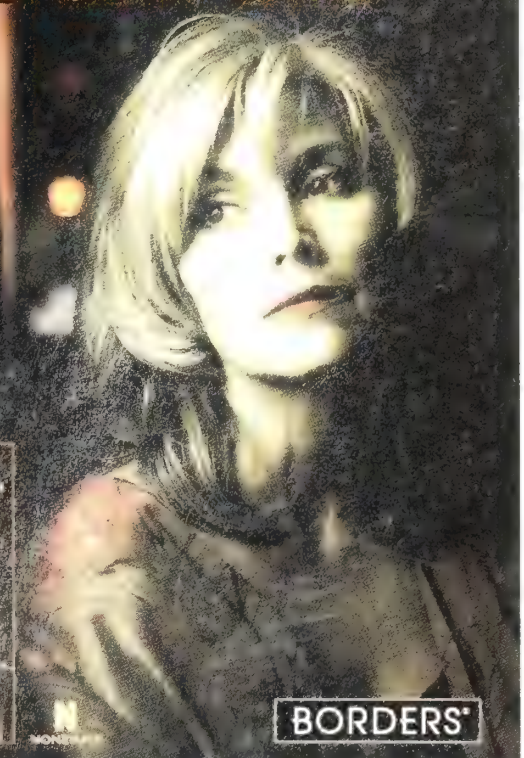
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Newsweek

"In songs about lonely journeys and lost companions, Ms. Harris has found herself."
The New York Times





BORDERS

Shades of Green

Whinesburg, U.P.

In "Escanaba's Magic Hour" [tember], Tom Bissell managed to the entire population of Upper M gan (yes, we do get *Harper's Mag* up here in the woods). Bissell's pse intellectual writing brands us a clumsy, beer-swilling, poverty-st en yahoos. He even insults our d

Bissell must have spent some unhappy early years in Escanaba. haps he's identifying with Re Soady, the protagonist of *Escana da Moonlight* who couldn't bag a Could it be that Bissell was a tru ed, buckless Yooper and is now e ing his revenge? Come back, we'll provide you with a few good l ing lessons. Maybe bagging a buc make you a happier camper.

Tom Hamm
Marquette, Mich.

I am, like Tom Bissell, anot Escanaba's diaspora. He's right

Nader's presidential candidacy, wh Lewis Lapham captured so well, is t tument to how much the pro-signe the concerns of young Americans

Only 32 percent of voters age e teen to twenty-four cast ballots in 1996 presidential election, and e smaller percentages report discuss politics with their peers or working political campaigns. Pundits who of cite politicians' mendacity and cor ity as the cause of young people's affection with politics should be ger to praise an ethically impecca candidate who urges youth to "t on to politics." But the media are concerned with the horse race betw Bush and Gore to abet Nader's eff to increase civic engagement by "a ing the right questions."

A character in the comic s *Doonesbury* once implored a frie "Remember if I die to tell my chil about Adlai Stevenson." A more sponsible press would help Nader t America's youth what Steven taught young voters during the 19 that political involvement and pu service can be noble pursuits.

Ronald Seyb
Skidmore College
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

I thank God for Lewis Lapham's elo quent endorsement of Ralph Nader. Democrats and Republicans have been playing "good cop, bad cop," for the last eight years. Newt Gingrich made Clinton look liberal. Now Bush has who would epitomize pure evil if he didn't cut such a ridiculous figure, is making Gore look like a nice guy.

It is no wonder that during the last eight years many Americans have been lulled to sleep by the corporate media and now seem oblivious to economic injustice, the erosion of the Bill of Rights, the unconscionable environmental debt our generation will hand down to the next. But those who have maintained some awareness throughout the greediest, meanest, most myopic decade of the American century have an ethical responsibility to cast a symbolic vote for social progress. Nader is the only candidate who represents a challenge to business as usual.

We mustn't let fear of the "bad cop" stop us from doing what is right, especially when the "good cop" is only a shade less corrupt.

Bradley Butterfield
Eugene, Ore.

I remain unconvinced that Ralph Nader is worth my protest vote. The argument that he is creating a third party is specious; a party cannot be built from the top down. Ask the Independent of 1968 or the Perot Independent/Reform voters from 1992 what their candidates left behind. The fact that Nader didn't [illegible] more about his running [illegible] printed in his campaign literature reveals that his commitment to the Green Party is limited.

[illegible]

The media's belittlement of Ralph

...e. Escanaba is a small town, past ...y and dull as it ever had, with simple, ...ntentious people. But in his haste ...associate himself from Escanaba, ...ler to associate himself with the ...e People and to impress his new ...e York friends, he has betrayed his ...town. His article lacks any ...th for the decency of Escanabans ...heir way of life. Don't you re...ber what a fine place Escanaba ...o spend your childhood? Shame ...u, Tom Bissell!

...n Melekos
..., Chalkidiki, Greece

...om Bissell's essay should have been ...ed "fiction." Escanaba is a won...lly friendly town, full of honest, ..., and hardworking people. That a ...e was filmed in our fair city is not ...laim to fame, as Bissell seems to ...g. We are already famous for our ...gs (a real treat if you've never had ..., our candy, and Chicago Cubs ...er Kevin Tapani. Many celebrities ... here, so we are not in awe of a ... company. However, we found all the people connected to the movie to be very nice. Escanaba took them into her heart in love, not awe.

Bissell was also wrong to label the U.P. bleak and underpopulated. There are 1,700 miles of shoreline around some of the largest lakes in the world. Here you can climb the highest mountains in the Midwest and rappel 200-foot sandstone cliffs.

I am sure Bissell will be writing many fine articles in the future. In spite of your unflattering story, we love you, hometown boy. You're one of us!

Donna M. Whitman
Escanaba, Mich.

Anxiety Attack

I gather from reading Dave Hickey's essay on the role of art in our society ["A World Like Santa Barbara," Readings, September] that we in Santa Barbara occupy the same level of hell as teenage suburban killers. Our mutual sin: the desire to banish anxiety from the world.

Santa Barbara's enlightened elite has realized this damnable goal by ex...

...people who ... the reader to ... drums we in Santa ... up "quantum ... sutter, the popularity of Reagan."

So, according to Hickey, we don't need art, which is tautological, and because, lacking anxiety, we apparently have no artists or writers. (We also have no non-whites driven by poverty, anger, or ambition, and no youngsters anxious about being teenagers.)

But Hickey is wrong. We in Santa Barbara have as much anxiety as people anywhere; we just have better weather.

Philip Koplin
Santa Barbara, Calif.

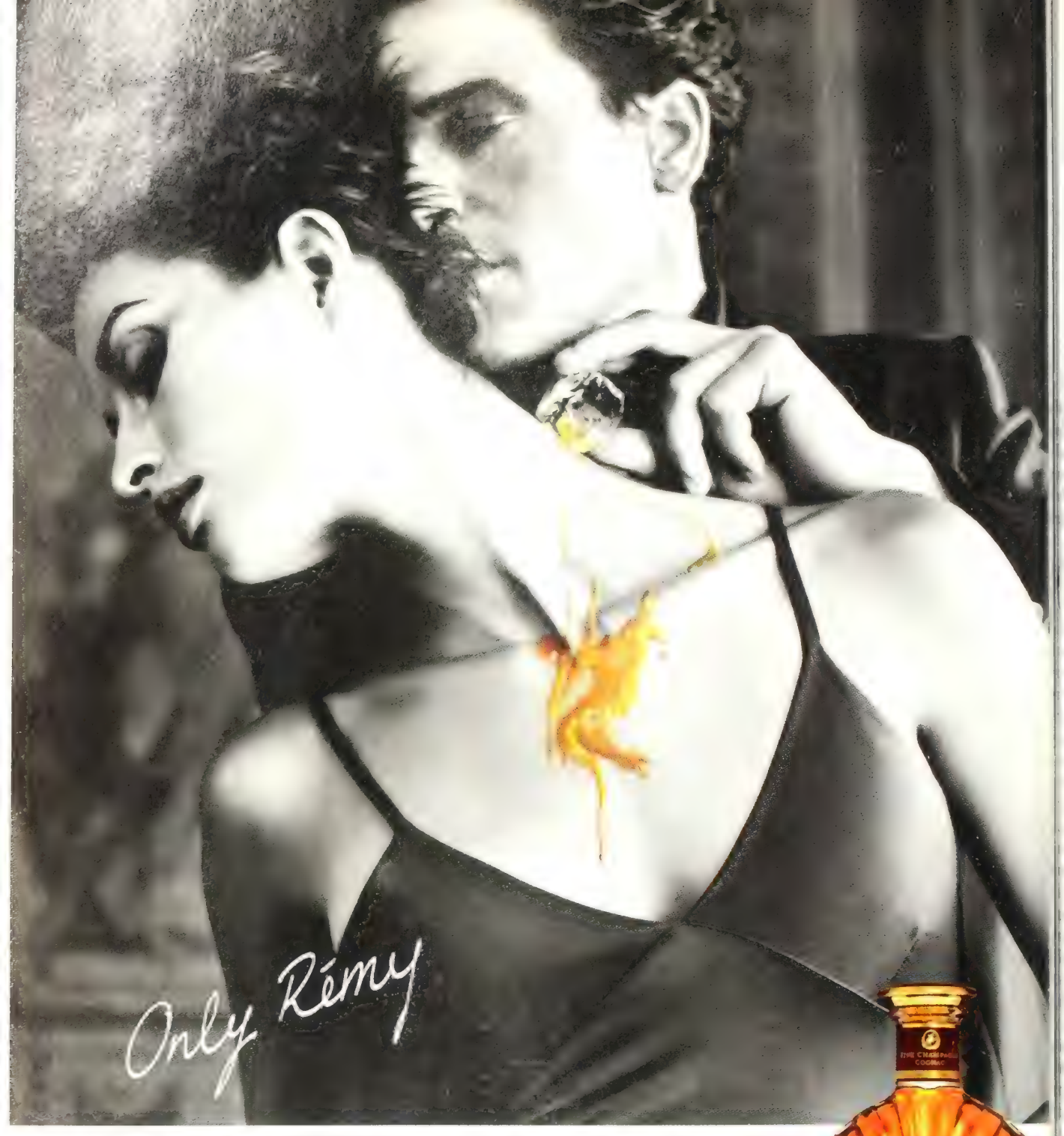
Correction

Gail F. Binney-Norberg's letter in the September issue ["Dry Mouths"] contained the claim that in Florida an average of 138 million gallons of water are used per capita per day. The figure should have been 1,213 gallons. The mistake was made by *Harper's*, not by the writer. We regret the error.



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NOTEBOOK

Paper moons

By Lewis H. Lapham

e physical environment is the earth, the ld of ideas corresponds to the heavens sleep under the light of stars that have since ceased to exist, and we pattern behavior by ideas which have no ity as soon as we cease to credit them.

—Lewis Mumford

Once or twice a week I receive tter from a reader who takes me ask for writing essays that neglect recommend a course of moral im- vement or a program of social re- n. The correspondents invariably e their complaints in a set of ilar catchphrases—easy enough ind fault with the country's poli- , or prime-time television broad- ting, even easier to pass judg- nts and distribute sarcasms, but t is the point of the criticism if I n't come up with words of encour- ment and an architect's rendering the proverbial City on the Hill? hen and how do police sergeants ome philosopher kings, and ere is the road to utopia?

Not being much given to the vi- nary habit of thought, I never know v to answer the questions, and so early October I was glad to see that New York Public Library had unted an exhibition entitled topia: The Search for the Ideal So- ty in the Western World." The ad- vance publicity mentioned 400 manu- pts and drawings salvaged from the ckage of the last 1,000 years (among m a seventeenth-century "Map of Situation of the Terrestrial Par- se" and a fair copy of the Declaration ndependence in Thomas Jefferson's n hand), and I figured that I was nd to come across some sort of op- istic message in a bottle dritted ashore in the twenty-first century from "an imaginary and indefinitely remote place" where the inhabitants live in a state of perpetual bliss.

I bought the catalogue and followed the plan of the exhibition, which the library's curators had arranged as a history lesson moving forward in time from the first edition of Thomas More's *Utopia*, published in Latin in 1516, to photographs of the 1967 summer of love in San Francisco. The old texts glittered with gold leaf and painted swans, the worn parchment still bright with the promise of good news in the City of Ladies or the Kingdom of Prester John, and most of the objects in the display—lovingly illuminated Bibles once possessed by a duke of Mantua or a princess in Bruges, an engraving of Albrecht Dürer's, the original copy of Voltaire's *Candide*—were as rare and strange as the reports, from the medieval lands of Cockaigne, of mountains of grated cheese and roasted birds falling from the sky like rain.

Prior to More's coining of the term utopia (a combination of Greek words meaning both "good place" and "no place") the European tellers of fantastic tales had relied on images found in the poetry of classical antiquity or the iconography of the early Christian Church. The ruin of the Roman empire transformed the landscape of Arcadia. Virgil's happy shepherds playing panpipes in the Elysian fields, Ovid's immortal heroes comforted with apples on the Islands of the Blest—into the Garden of Eden; the shift from secular verse to religious doctrine didn't reconfigure the metaphysics. Arcadia and Paradise both exist in the world out of time, the sky forever blue, the wind blowing softly from the fragrant south, and nothing to do but pat the animals and pick the grapes.

More introduced the possibility of a peaceable kingdom just over the horizon of historical time, his island of Utopia located somewhere off the coast of the newly discovered Americas, conceivably within reach of the sixteenth-century sailing ship on the title page of the third edition, illustrated by a brother of Hans Holbein the Younger and printed at Basel in 1518. Crescent-shaped and fertile, the island emerges with the benefit of divine favor from the foam of a soon-to-be-charted sea, its climate and topography formed by the Renaissance debate on the nature of a just society. Drawing on his experience as chancellor to Henry VIII as well as his reading of Plato's *Republic*, More writes the first European prospectus for a commonwealth constructed on the ground plan of human reason. What interests him is the common good, not the gratification of individual desire, and as a system of government he proposes a benign monarchy that condemns to slavery those members of the company who commit the crimes of selfishness. Farmers to the city bring their corn and wheat for the communal pictures of their own, sumptuary laws govern the uniformly modest manner of dress (no gaudy silver, no heavy silk), the shows of conspicuous consumption meet with [illegible] ment, and the use of [illegible] for the building [illegible]

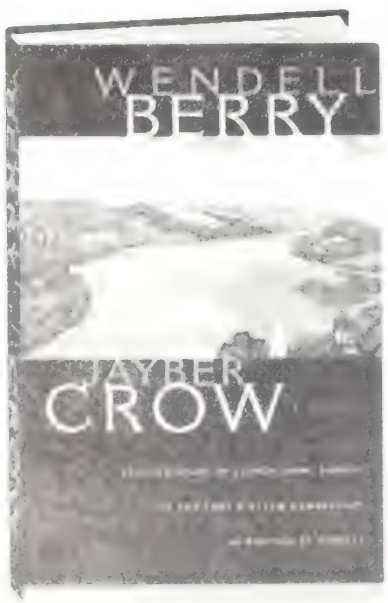
Intended in part [illegible] corrupt and brutal [illegible] More in the place [illegible] Tudor England, [illegible] "money is [illegible] changes [illegible] and in [illegible] to the [illegible] appeared [illegible] Age of [illegible]

precise and
evocation
of a vanishing
lifestyle and of
the liberating power
of faith."

CROW

A NOVEL

WENDELL
BERRY



"*Jayber Crow* is an observant and
agreeably rough-hewn book...

COUNTERPOINT PRESS

literary genre immediately popular and often imitated, and in league with the freebooting ship captains embarking to Virginia and Brazil the authors of utopian romances over the course of the next two centuries charted passages into a new world of political thought. Sir Philip Sydney's *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* appeared in 1590, Sir Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* in 1627; the aids to navigation gradually improved, and so did the imagined architecture of the philosophical city. By the time the library's collection of visionary texts moved around the far corner of the exhibition hall into the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, the latitude and longitude of More's prosperous island had been situated in the political theory of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke.

As the utopian premise evolves into the ideas of democratic government and scientific progress, the books and drawings in the display cases become more literal-minded and didactic—treatises and proclamations instead of visions revealed in dreams, satires (those of Swift and Samuel Butler as well as Voltaire) meant to be read as remedies for an ailing body politic, declarations of independence and the Rights of Man, new measurements of space and time (imposed by decree of the French Revolution), John Minter Morgan's diagram of "All Mankind's Unbounded Sympathy," Charles Fourier's classification of the Passions (expressed as an arrangement of musical notes), early photographs of the Mormon Tabernacle, the first edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, published in German in 1848, slogans once posted on the walls of the Paris Commune in 1871.

Electrological wonders of the next hundred years bring the exhibition into the twentieth century and the future [illegible] the 1939 World's Fair [illegible] and thus [illegible] present [illegible] the present the suburban state. But the century's wars discouraged the fabrication of utopian romance, and in the library's display cases the representative literary texts [illegible]

island somewhere in a sunlit sea co[illegible] to be seen as a cruel illusion cond[illegible] ing the barbed wire of[illegible] prison and the death c[illegible]

I made the rounds of the exhib[illegible] on the morning after Vice Presi[illegible] Al Gore and Governor George[illegible] Bush entertained an audience[illegible] Boston with the first of their aut[illegible] presidential debates, and later in th[illegible] ternoon, when I had a chance to [illegible] a transcript of their remarks, I un[illegible] stood that I was not alone in my ta[illegible] to imagine the forms of an ideal [illegible] ety. Like the figures in a Punch [illegible] Judy show wielding rubber bats [illegible] two candidates had belabored each [illegible] er with a flurry of furious statistics [illegible] about the character and purpose o[illegible] American commonwealth they [illegible] said nothing of interest. No chil[illegible] were to be "left behind," but as to w[illegible] the society might be going, with [illegible] maps in hand and what fortunate[illegible] tination in mind, the candid[illegible] seemed neither to know nor to c[illegible] Apparently they thought the car[illegible] already had arrived. Their easy pl[illegible] es about the nature of the good li[illegible] sembled the promotions for British [illegible] ways or Budweiser, and it occurre[illegible] me that in the library's display ca[illegible] had been looking at the relics of a[illegible] expedition to a forgotten contine[illegible]

Across the span of the four cent[illegible] between the publication of M[illegible] book and the outbreak of World [illegible] I the projectors of a better world [illegible] presupposed the striving for a c[illegible] mon good—the just society, the pl[illegible] sophical city, the *res publica*. A sy[illegible] that didn't work satisfactorily for ev[illegible] body didn't work decently for anyb[illegible]

The old humanist proposit[illegible] doesn't sell shoes or chocolate ca[illegible] doesn't buy votes in Connecticu[illegible] seaside condominiums in Florida. [illegible] consumerist society born into [illegible] twentieth century with the glori[illegible] the industrial economy strives for[illegible] perfections of the self, and its ag[illegible] and apostles (among them candi[illegible] Bush and Gore) entrust the pr[illegible] tions of a better world to the ma[illegible] der catalogues and the departm[illegible] stores. During the course of a no[illegible] day the average American se[illegible] many as 3,000 advertisements—[illegible] television, in the magazines, [illegible]

. rkets, on billboards and base-
l. ps—that serve as a field guide to
arden of Earthly Delight de-
Hby Ovid and Virgil. Once again
back in the world out of time,
y forever blue, the wind blowing
t from the fragrant south, and
g to do but put the Lexus and
he golf balls.

4 opposed to the utopian hope of
ase into the future and the dis-
y of construction of something
the landscapes of Arcadia offer
onvenience of refuge and es-
—Peter Pan's Never Land or
Hefner's mansion in Holmby
gated community on the Mon-
Peninsula, and God revealed at
as a majestic and all-wise
erge. Not a bad place, but aimless
nsufferably dull, which is why
ide didn't stay for the whole of
mmer season among the palm
of Eldorado. To whom could he
find on what subjects other than
eather and the lawn furniture?

e materialist Paradise doesn't
important distinctions between
oisy shepherds and the quiet
. Neither does a consumer society
defines the good life as a com-
ty. In Arcadia nobody worries
the common good because it is
for granted; everybody is im-
al, and Divine Providence has sup-
the land of milk and honey. The
et economy assigns to money the
rs once possessed by Zeus. No-
owning beach-front property at
ville or Malibu worries about the
non good because it comes with
rice of the view; if one weren't
ortal (i.e., rich enough to gambol
nymphs and fauns and goat-foot-
lebrities) one wouldn't be drink-
ing Evian water and looking
at the pretty sailboats.

I have trouble drawing the blue-
t of a credible utopia, possibly it's
ise I've seen too many television
mercials, heard too many ban-
speeches, swallowed too much
ganda about how the free mar-
ts another name for democracy.
market, of course, isn't democra-
or is it interested in the public
d. The market speaks only to
politely to people with a lot
, rudely to those without—and
the merchants of bliss address their sales pitches to the private good, targeting the demographics, dividing communities into postal codes and telephone exchanges, breaking down the family members into profitable fragments of will and appetite, wish and dream. Incapable of making moral or aesthetic judgments, the market happily commissions the building of St. Paul's Cathedral and the furnaces of Treblinka. The customer is always right.

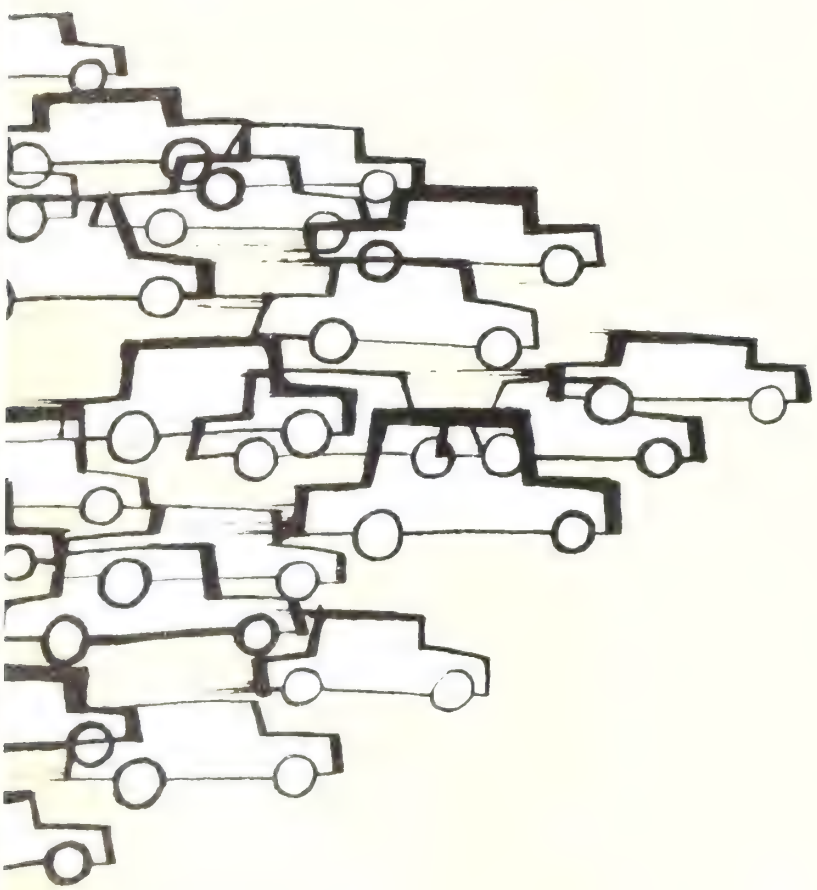
The notion that the consumer economy somehow possesses "values" (as if it were an old trout fisherman or a bishop) is ridiculous on its face, but for the moment it commands the affection and respect not only of the newspapers and the banks but also of the universities, the art colonies, and the scientific guilds—i.e., most of the people who might otherwise be looking for a way out of the perfume salesman's dream of Eden.

Fortunately I know a good many people whose names don't make the papers but who continue to work at the project of a better world. Not on big construction sites, nothing as grand as the boulevards of Hitler's Thousand-Year Reich or Hillary Clinton's redesign of the American health-care system, but in smaller places—raising funds for a library or a school, deeding fifty acres to a public park, studying the moons of Jupiter. In the city of New York in the first year of the new millennium, I live among the remnants of utopias come and gone and "under the light of stars that have long since ceased to exist," and on my way out of the library in early October I remembered the lines of Anatole France:

> Without the Utopians of other times, men would still live in caves, miserable and naked. . . . Utopia is the principle of all progress and the essay into a better future.

Ask me where is the road to utopia, and I would guess that it probably can be found two blocks south or one block west, around the corner or across the street. Ask me to visualize the City on the Hill, and I would say that it is best understood as a "no place," a distant light on a far horizon, a generous idea whose time has not yet come. ■





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you were being followed?

ys. But we've done more than just talk. In 1997 we introduced the Toyota
luced gas/electric vehicle, the Prius. As the automotive industry
veloping the next generation of environmental vehicle technology. The lights are green. Let's go.

TOYOTA

HARPER'S INDEX

Number of the one hundred countries with the world's highest birthrates that have approved the [illegible] : all

Change in the abortion rate in France since RU-486 was introduced there in 1988 : –4

Price for which an eight-year-old Colorado girl was offered for sale by her mother over the Internet last year : $4,

Number of couples who will each receive $5,000 this year from IUMA.com for naming their baby Jun : 1,

Percentage change since 1991 in the number of U.S. babies abandoned after leaving the hospital : +61

Number of American states in which physicians may legally prescribe clean needles to addicts : 45

Number of these states in which pharmacists may legally fill such prescriptions : 26

Factor by which Texas's incarceration rate has increased since 1990 for every 1 percent drop in its crime rate : 4

Factor by which New York's incarceration rate has increased since then for every 1 percent drop in its crime rate : 0.7

Percentage of Americans who say they would prefer being executed to serving a life sentence without parole : 47

Ratio of the number of attacks on U.S. citizens or property in Latin America last year to those in the Middle East : 5:1

Ratio of the number of Africans killed by AIDS last year to the number killed by warfare : 19:1

Factor by which the number of sovereign countries today exceeds the number in 1945 : 3

Ratio of the number of bushels of wheat one barrel of oil could buy in 1950 to the number it could buy today : 1:1

Rank of the United States among the world's largest exporters of grain and importers of oil : 1

Rank of Estonia among the world's top importers of U.S. frogs' legs in 1998 : 1

Estimated change in the size of the Russian population last year : [illegible]

Change in the number of Russian voters registered in the three months prior to Vladimir Putin's election : +1,298,090

Percentage of the votes cast in Chechnya last March that went to Putin, according to the Russian government : 51

Average number of Palestinians killed per day by Israeli security forces in the six years preceding the 1993 Oslo accord : 0.4

Average number killed per day in the two weeks following Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount last fall : 5.1

Chances that an OPEC country discloses its poverty rate : 4 in 11

Chance that the poverty rate of an OPEC country that discloses it is less than 15 percent : 0

Ratio of the monthly salary the U.N. pays its native clerks in East Timor to what it pays its other employees there : 1:5.6

Number of Falun Gong members arrested in China who have died in, en route to, or shortly after their release from prison : 53

Days after his appointment last July that Japan's top finance regulator resigned over "suspicious" payments he'd received : 26

Months before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor that the United States enacted a complete embargo on trade with Japan : 5

Number of times that visiting foreign defense ministers have been injured by the Pentagon's security system since 1995 : 2

Number of *New York Times* articles in 1990, 1992, and 1999, respectively, that mentioned the "peace dividend" : 152, 64, 9

Pounds of ordnance that can be delivered by Boeing's new X-45A, the world's first unmanned fighter jet : 3,000

Number of planes crashed by the Wright brothers before their first successful flight on December 17, 1903 : 1

Number of campaigns lost by the sons of George H. W. Bush before winning any : 2

Ratio of the average duration of an 1858 Lincoln-Douglas senatorial debate to that of a presidential debate this year : 4:1

Ratio of the number of glaciers in Montana's Glacier National Park in 1850 to the number last year : 4:1

Number of known asteroids whose size and orbital trajectories render them "potentially hazardous" to Earth : 258

Number of the two exorcisms Pope John Paul II has performed since 1982 that the Vatican has deemed a success : 1

Minutes required to take in "the true story of Christmas" at Little Rock's [illegible] Nativity drive-through : 2

Rank of Bill Clinton among the "most important people in the world today," according to U.S. schoolchildren : 1

Rank of the Pope, J. K. Rowling, and God, respectively : 2, 13, 19

Rank of "myself" : 11

Figures are those that have been adjusted for inflation or are the latest available. [illegible] Source: [illegible]

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The Greater Prairie Chicken is one of several species to benefit from the latest conservation effort by Phillips Petroleum. Together with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Phillips will help restore and manage 19,500 acres in northwestern Missouri, making it a safe haven for high-priority birds. Now breeding populations of Greater Prairie Chickens, Henslow's Sparrows and Bobolinks will have improved chance of survival. And the finished proj will become the first of many bird conservati areas to eventually span the country. It's just o more way Phillips works to improve our world and w we're known as The Performance Company.

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READINGS

[Essay]

MESSAGES FROM THE GENOME

From an essay by Arthur B. Cody in the June issue of Commentary. *Cody is currently at work on a book about evolutionary psychology.*

Genetics is the new science. Every day, something fascinating appears in the newspapers or on television, in magazines or books, in connection with the genetic engineering of crops and animals, the Human Genome Project and all that it portends for our future, or the imminent conquest of human disease through gene therapy. But whatever the specific subject may be, the cornerstone of almost every story about the science of genetics is the central significance of the DNA molecule—the genome—which contains the complete set of instructions for making an organism.

The concept is, indeed, astounding. No matter how many times you encounter the notion that from a small set of chromosomes—tiny objects that can be seen only under extreme magnification—a fly or a whale is constructed, it remains staggeringly hard to take in. But you would not know this from reading the journalists and researchers who interpret the new science for us. To them, there is little that is incomprehensible about the process. We may be ignorant of details, to be sure, but our ignorance, we are assured, is rapidly evaporating. The theory is sound and proved, the research proceeds apace, the authorities have spoken. And what they have told us is that, although the information contained in the genome is immense, we know how it works, and we stand on the verge of controlling it.

Articles and books on the subject consistently emphasize the amount of information contained in the genome, and they always appeal to a handful of metaphors. To take one example of many, the science writer Matt Ridley, in *Genome*, the most recent of his three books on evolution and human nature, proclaims ours to be a lucky generation, for we will be the first "to read the book that is the genome." Just how abundant is that genome? As long, Ridley writes, as 800 Bibles—"a gigantic document, an immense book, a recipe of extravagant length." About a gigabyte of data, in other words: a billion characters. Reading the book of our genome, moreover, "will tell us more about our dreams, our evolution, our nature, and our minds than all the efforts of science to date."

Why so much excitement? The secrets of the genome? Clearly, building an organism requires a tremendous amount of information, and that information must come from somewhere. As Ridley puts it: "Something, somewhere must be imposing a pattern of increasing detail upon the egg as it grows and develops. There must be a plan. But unless we are to invoke divine intervention, that [illegible] must be within the egg itself."

Ridley's "must" expresses the assumption on which all [illegible] properly rest—that explanations can appeal only to natural objects and processes. In the present context, what this means is that the capacity of the genome to construct an organism must lie both in the

ductory textbook, with the regulatory genes

The body formation starts with a gene (actually its protein), a morphogen called *bicoid*, which establishes the front-rear polarity of the egg; then genes regulate the origin of segmen- genes set up modular pair segmentation; then, at last, the *homeotic* genes come at some body segment location.

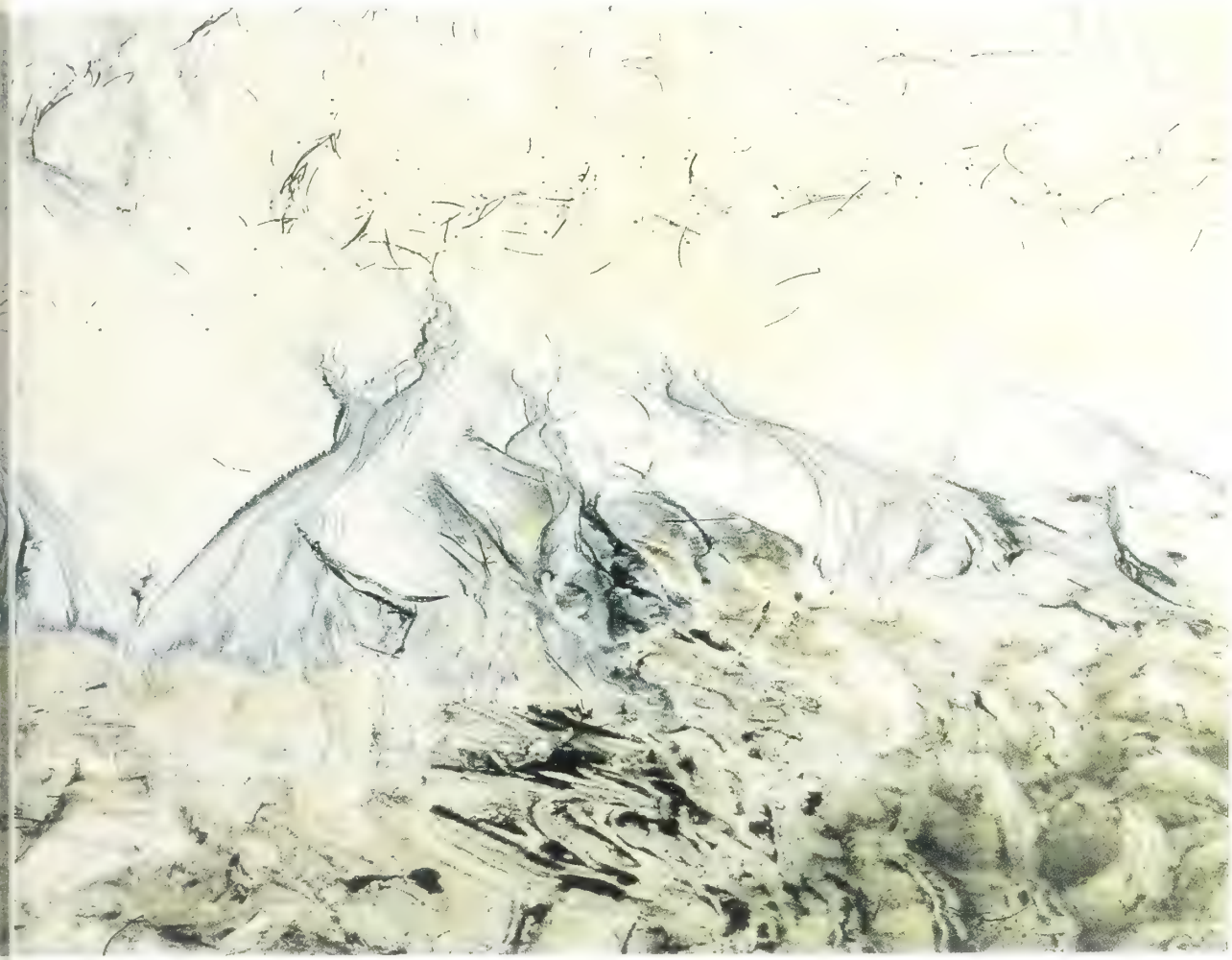
increasing refinement that culminates in the homeotic genes. There are, in fact, hundreds manufacture of a bewildering range of body and structures. One homeotic gene will switch to include a homeotic gene, that gene will in turn switch on other genes, and so forth, thus producing a "cascade" effect. In combination, as by a polynomial formula, the mutual ef- panded in an orderly fashion—a fashion that may properly be called computational.

Ridley observes that once a cell knows where gene switches, regulatory genes— a kidney cell' or something like that." Of course, does not mean it literally. As he proceeds to explain, "There are no computers and no guide- gene switches on gene which switches on gene."

which each cell conducts itself. Although it is nt of its neighborhood, or indifferent its neighbors, it receives no instruction from anywhere outside itself. (This is exclude influences of the environment, such influences are influential only acc rules published in the genome.) Self-assembly is carried out according to each cell's instructions, instructions that are somehow generally available for each cell to

The wonder, then, is that the genome oper- where and always in the same way. me is the creative machine working or human.

Now let us retrace our steps and ask again sufficient information and sufficient power to make an organism.



S. Trees I," a photograph by Lee Stoetzel, is currently on display at Mixed Greens (mixedgreens.com), an online gallery.

First, there is a minor correction to be made in the one-gigabyte claim. More than 90 percent of the DNA does not code for proteins, and within each DNA gene there is again another percentage that is unused. Thus, rather than a gigabyte, it may be more correct to say that there are fewer than 100 megabytes of useful data in the genome, an amount that even a vintage hard drive can manage.

Then there is a curious messiness surrounding the numbers. The number of chromosomes differs among species, and for no apparent reason. Chimpanzees have 24, one more than we do. Sheep have 26, plus the X and Y; the muntjac, a small deer, has just two, plus an X and two Ys. Crabs have over 250. Perhaps there is no importance to this fact, but it does shake one's confidence that everything always, and everywhere, operates in a strict order.

Another confidence-shaking fact is this: the number of nucleotides in the genome also varies wildly, and again for no perceptible reason. If the human genome has 3 billion base pairs, the tiger lily has 100 billion, over thirty times as many; the lowly salamander has fewer than the lily but fifteen times more than the human. How many genes do their genomes divide into, how much junk? The answer is not known exactly, though it is known that the little zebra fish that swims in the Ganges has 100,000 genes, just as we do, and that those genes happen to be very similar to ours.

Does any of this matter? Perhaps not. What matters, clearly, is that the base pairs, the materials of the genome, function in a way that will build an organism from scratch and without any instructional aid from outside. But consider the stupendous labor to be discharged in this task. Creating enzymes, cells, skeleton, and organs, together with the systems for their regulation, monitoring, metering, repairing, timing, orientating, sensing, and coordinating in movements

H

ird is not

get nourish-

Think of the social behavior of ants, the web-

trees, the

the intricacies

n our

ls in the hu-

This figures regularly in many popularized renditions of contemporary genetics (as in 's April 10 cover story about the Human Genome Project). The image of a blueprint seems fitting because blueprints prefigure relationships of its elements. More important, the design is read as a set of instructions: make it come to pass that the object looks like this. The fundamental difficulty with the blueprint metaphor is that the genome is not reader, no agent, to be instructed and to follow directions. A blueprint presupposes precisely the kind of intelligence that, in the genome, we

an instruction book or guidebook of some kind, a book carrying the instructions that direct each cell in the self-arrangement routine appropriate to its particular place in the organism, and that prompt all the cells to arrange themselves first into the various parts of the organism and then the whole. By means of replication (from one DNA molecule to another), every cell can have its own book to read. By means of translation, proteins are made.

Making proteins is important, but we still do not have a metaphor that captures the genome's presumed power to design and construct an entire organism. That power, if it is to be found anywhere, must reside in the compu- l by the proteins that are expressed by the homeotic genes.

the least. It is not just that computers not make anything. After all, sometimes they do: a powerful computer hooked up to an assembly line might very well make an automobile, a washing machine, or (when the day household robot; and it might repli- nderstand it, anything having to simulating cognition, is

bout the marvelous t the protein produced by this gene (according to the usual formula, only sixty amino sinuates itself into one of the n a small set of cells at some def- tion at an appropriate time velopment; there it switches on genes, usually between eight







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proposal to suggest. It is the farmer who picks up the sticks, and it is the cows that know their way to the milking barn. Nothing in the homeotic story simulates the farmer's or the cows' intelligence. "Triggering" is an interesting biological event; it goes nowhere toward explaining construction. What kicks the homeotic gene into action? No answer exists, factual or theoretical.

And why does a leg or a forebrain form under the prodding of the homeotic gene? This is like the question, Why do the cows come home? The homeotic gene triggers other genes, and genes make proteins. How do the proteins that are expressed by those subordinate genes find their way into a highly structured organization like a leg or an eye? Once again the answer is, no one knows. Not only does no one know, no one has the slightest idea how to look for an answer.

Flamboyant cognitive metaphors such as reading, understanding, knowledge, intention, and so forth, are utterly irreducible to biological mechanics, and there is also no analogy in mechanical or computer technology to help us. The homeotic recital is somewhat like a tale of components for a Boeing 747 coming together to form a landing gear or tail assembly when the shipping crates in which their parts have arrived at the plant are opened by a crowbar. In a way, the crowbar is essential to the landing gear, and, in a way, the crowbar also controls the downstream pathway of the nuts, bolts, struts, wheels, tires, and so forth: for unless the crates are opened, the parts cannot be assembled. But in the genome, the parts themselves know where they belong. Moreover, they go where they belong by themselves, without any help from the crowbar or anyone wielding it.

At last we are able to observe something very clearly: it is not ignorance that befuddles us but what we know. We know, to repeat, that the mammalian genome contains only about 100,000 genes. And we know—we can see all around us—that what the genome must do is immense. From this knowledge we have constructed explanations that do not explain.

Obviously, incontestably, the fertilization of a single egg by a single sperm cell is materially sufficient to make an organism. And, as has been proved by the successful cloning of goats and cows from differentiated cells, the "information" to make an organism remains within every collection of chromosomes. The genome [illegible] makes the organism. But we do not know *how* it makes the organism, and what we do know, as we presently know it, offers us no theory, no model, of how an explanation

[illegible]

WHO AM I:

[illegible] in the spirit of Trans [illegible]

I am:
- ☐ male
- ☐ female
- ☐ male to female
- ☐ female to male
- ☐ helping professional
- ☐ [illegible]

And I consider myself a:
- ☐ man
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ third (4th, etc.) gendered
- ☐ nongendered person
- ☐ intersexed person
- ☐ cross-dresser
- ☐ transvestite
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ I do not consider myself transgendered
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]

My [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ lesbian
- ☐ asexual
- ☐ pansexual

I [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ [illegible]
- ☐ the individual, regardless of their gender



ABSOLUT CALLIGRAPHY AND ABSOLU



heirs unto all eternity.

The promise held out by these enterprises is nothing short of breathtaking. But they are, to put it gently, inherently dangerous. Genes are [illegible] programmes, and we ourselves do not work [illegible] computers. Unless and until we know how collections of genes go together, how they [illegible] plants or animals or human beings, we will not know [illegible] existing organism or manipulate the [illegible] operations. It is terrible to contemplate [illegible] remaining we make [illegible] in the book of life.

[Interview]

FOREIGN AIDS CRISIS

From a September 2 interview on South Africa Radio 702 with the country's health minister, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang. In late 1999, President Thabo Mbeki refused to distribute AZT to pregnant women to help the roughly 1,000 HIV-positive babies born in South Africa (about 5,000 monthly). On September 20, in defense of this decision, Mbeki claimed that a government campaign of [the] Western media and medical establishment to say that AIDS is not a disease of poverty . . . [but] that AZT . . . is a danger to health . . . has been assisted by quislings as 'salespersons' for the multinationals. A South African newspaper recently polled all twenty-seven members of Mbeki's cabinet; only one, the labor minister, said he believed that HIV causes AIDS. Approximately 1 percent of South Africa's population is HIV positive, and 1,500 people are infected each day. After this interview was aired, the African National Congress demanded that the interviewer, John Robbie, be fired.

JOHN ROBBIE: On the AIDS conspiracy theory, we have with us today the minister of health, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang. As you've heard by now, her office distributed to all the provincial health ministers a chapter of a book—this sounds loony—that claims that the Illuminati, this group that seeks world domination and that goes back to the Middle Ages, that they want to reduce the African population and therefore introduced AIDS to Africa via the malignant vaccine. The author of the work, William Cooper, claims that invasions from outer space and AIDS are linked to a conspiracy by the Illuminati, though he seems to have been discredited even by the conspiracy theorists themselves. What's it all about? On the line I've got the minister of health, Manto, thank you for talking to us.

MANTO TSHABALALA-MSIMANG: Hello, hello.

ROBBIE: Hello? This chapter from Cooper's book—did you send it?

TSHABALALA-MSIMANG: Every time we receive information in my department we circulate it to the Members of the Executive Council [provincial legislators], because even though the health department covers both national and regional concerns, and we share information, and that leaflet was among a pile of papers that was in my office for my information. Why somebody should just pick up on that one and not report on other things that we sent is absolutely mind-boggling to me.

ROBBIE: Well, given the [illegible]

TSHABALALA-MSIMANG: We give information to the MECs to distribute [illegible] pertinent, and to be informed about the policies, they know our track record of five years, so that they are not taken by surprise.

ROBBIE: But hang on, hang on, Manto. You were saying that this leaflet was circulated with another bunch of information [illegible] the office.

ROBBIE: But there was no instruction or comment on it. Nobody had written, for example, "And what about this—here's a laugh!" Or, "This theory is out there, that's why we are sending it." There was no instruction on these various documents.

TSHABALALA-MSIMANG: I have total confidence in the MECs who receive information from my office, because they are engaged with us on a continuous basis regarding the policies of this government. They are able to decipher nonsense from truth. I send a lot of documentation from this office.

ROBBIE: But given the fact that the president has questioned the cause of AIDS and whether HIV causes AIDS, wasn't it—

TSHABALALA-MSIMANG: Has the president ever— I don't want you to put words into the president's mouth.

ROBBIE: Let me finish my question, Manto. Given the fact that there has been this great confusion about the president's [illegible] Confusion—

TSHABALALA-MSIMANG: Of course there has been confusion.

TSHABALALA-MSIMANG: There has been miscommunication by the media. Don't call it confusion. It's miscommunication. I don't want us to put words into the president's mouth, because he has never said that.

ROBBIE: But he did talk to dissidents who many, many scientific people in this country regard as lunatics. You can't deny that.

TSHABALALA-MSIMANG: People who have got additional information to offer us—do you call them lunatics?

ROBBIE: There are people, eminent scientists, who regard as a lunatic anyone in the year 2000 who questions whether HIV causes AIDS.

TSHABALALA-MSIMANG: I don't know about lunatics, but those who express different [illegible] opinion, but we all don't understand.

ROBBIE: Can't we fully understand [illegible] Because these people [illegible]

TSHABALALA-MSIMANG: I'm sure you've got the question there for me. I'll answer you and that the policy [illegible] of health is well known, and that HIV causes AIDS.

FOR YOUR MISINFORMATION

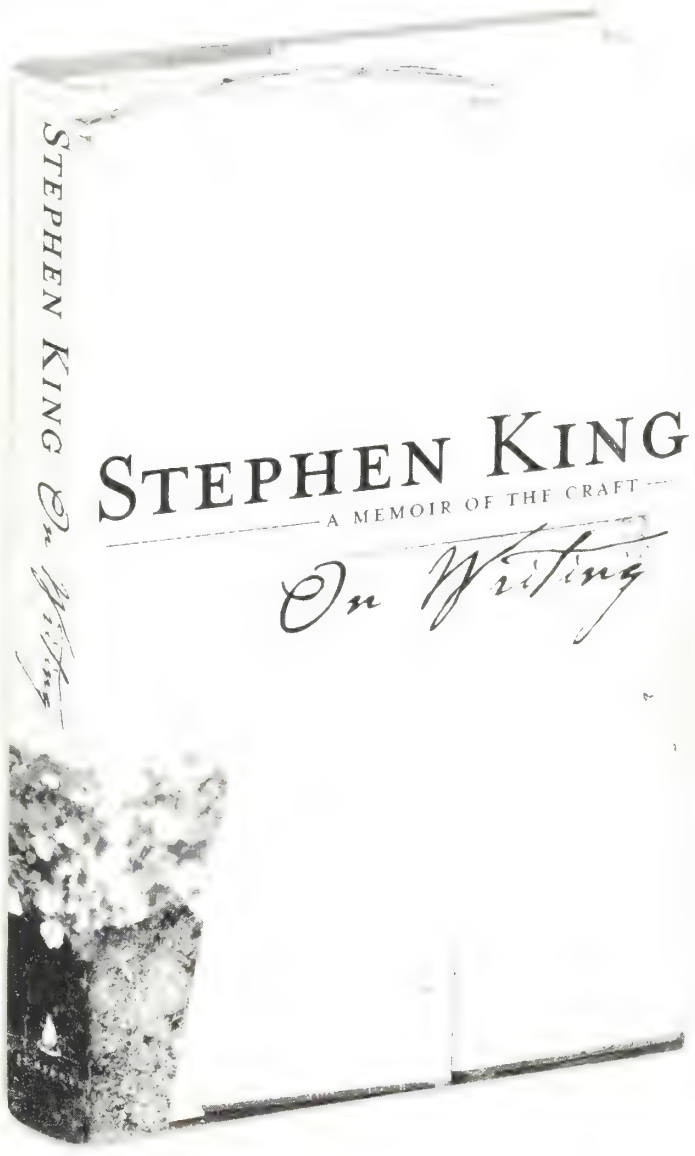
[illegible] FOR AFRICAN LEADERS ON [illegible] health ministers [illegible] excerpts from Behold a Pale Horse *by William Cooper was subsequently circulated, without comment, by South African health minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang to local officials throughout the country. [illegible] Cooper claims that, faced with the knowledge that "by or shortly after the year 2000 the total collapse of civilization as we know it and the possible extinction of the human race could occur," the "ruling elite" set out to suppress the world's population growth and introduced AIDS to [illegible] the most powerless.*

[illegible] In reference to the article I sent on [illegible] apparently extracted from William Cooper's book *Behold a Pale Horse*. You must [illegible] head up to inform the ignorant [illegible] Based on the reading:

- I [illegible] that the AIDS virus could destroy [illegible] vaccine that has been [illegible] in [illegible] country. Test all vaccines bought outside Africa to ensure [illegible] is not [illegible] in the vaccines that you are giving to the good people of [illegible].
- We recommend that you immediately set [illegible] to investigate all new HIV/AIDS solutions. This should include the [illegible] facilities, fences, barbed wire, and [illegible]. This will prevent any "unwanted" [illegible] from [illegible] Silent [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible].
- We [illegible] recommend the immediate establishment [illegible] to [illegible] corporations [illegible] AIDS [illegible] AIDS SOLUTIONS [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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—MARGOT MORRISON, *Newsday*

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—*Publishers Weekly* (starred boxed review)

"For anyone who wants to write and everyone who loves to read... an excellent memoir and writing manual."

—*Library Journal*

that the Illuminati have conspired with the aliens to create and use AIDS to reduce the African population.' And you sit, to yourself, let's get the minister on to explain it, and the next thing I would hear the question be of me to be very, very worried indeed. I find that bizarre. Anyway, I won't call her Manto again.

[Headline: Ad]

CRUDE AWAKENINGS

Extracts from a video, Exploring Ancient Futures, that was produced by the Shell Oil Company and distributed to schools

[*Two teenagers drive through the countryside in a convertible.*]

GIRL: Oh, what a beautiful day, huh? Hear the sounds, smell the smells.

MALE: [*Eyes closed*] Ah—birds, flowers, newly mowed grass.

GIRL: I'm talkin' about the sound of an internal combustion engine! The smell of the open road!

GIRL: But what about the wonders of nature?

GIRL: What about the wonders of cars and trucks? Planes and gasoline?

MALE: What are you talking about?

GIRL: That's how we travel. See the sights. Live where we want. Work where we want.

GIRL: Wow, what about nature?

GIRL: It takes gasoline to power the vehicles that get us *to* nature. And gasoline comes from nature.

MALE: [*Astonished*] Gasoline comes from nature?

GIRL: Sure. We used to get our oil and fuel from whales.

MALE: When whale oil became scarce, I guess, we needed another source.

GIRL: [*Nods in agreement*] Exactly. But now we get it from petroleum products, which we get—

At the gas station

—from the sea! Millions of years ago, when the oceans covered most of the earth, full of living sea creatures and plants lived there, and when they died, their remains sank to the bottom of the sea floor into all the layers of the silt and the sand.

Right. Scientists think that the earth's crust buckled and shifted and got all mangled and turned all that sea life into petroleum products.

[illegible] Horses used to deliver kerosene, in carts driven by door-to-door peddlers. In the 1850's, oil refineries made kerosene out of petroleum and used it for heating. They didn't have much use for gasoline. Horses are how people got around for years.

MALE: I guess they couldn't go as far or see as many things then.

FEMALE: Right. When pioneers crossed the country in horse-drawn covered wagons, it took a long time and it wasn't easy.

MALE: [*Nodding.*] Yeah, different from a vacation now, when we have all the cars, the trains, the planes, and the gas-powered vehicles.

FEMALE: Yeah. Anyway, in 1908, horseless carriages started to be mass-produced. That's what they called cars.

MALE: Horseless carriages? Because they didn't need horses to pull them?

FEMALE: Right. But they did need

MALE: Gasoline. So now we had cars that needed gasoline, hmm?

FEMALE: Right. That's pretty amazing!

MALE: What are you talking about?

FEMALE: This person looks at a horse and a carriage, thinks about it, and invents the impossible—a car with an engine to run it, instead of a horse.

MALE: Now, that's amazing.

FEMALE: Hey—it's the spirit of America!

MALE: The spirit of America?

FEMALE: The spirit of America is doing something that can't be done! Thinking and trying and learning until you can do the impossible.

MALE: I guess with more cars, they needed more gasoline.

FEMALE: Right. So men like Edwin Drake started planning new ways to get petroleum.

MALE: Is that the spirit of America again?

FEMALE: Sure! Drake figured a way to drill petroleum from underground. He found an oil well in Titusville, Pennsylvania.

MALE: [*Flabbergasted.*] I—I—I thought oil wells were in Texas and California.

FEMALE: There, too! Drake's discovery started an oil boom! Refineries sprouted everywhere, turning crude oil into gasoline.

MALE: But with all those cars, we also got smog.

FEMALE: Well, that's why the spirit of America went to work again. New gas nozzles introduced in 1970 take 120 tons of smog out of the air every day!

MALE: [*In a southern drawl.*] Ah don't see you pullin' up your car to a refinery in Texas.

FEMALE: I don't see me pulling up anywhere! Find a gas station! Anyway, a network for the distribution of petroleum spread all over. Oil companies [illegible] used transport ancient [illegible] nuts to customers who lived [illegible] oil wells. Soon, motorists could buy [illegible] service stations that were [illegible] every town.

MALE: Exactly!

FEMALE: So—find us a gas station!

[FAQ]

DO I NEED A HOLE IN THE HEAD?

From the website of the Trepanation Interest Group, an organization that promotes the health benefits of drilling a hole in one's skull

What is the point of trepanation?

Blood is the brain's food. The point of trepanation is to get more blood into the capillaries of the brain, so that metabolism is enhanced. For the rest of your life more of the brain's centers are able to function at the same time, as they are lifted from starvation rations to a more generous supply of food. To have more of your brain functioning is to [illegible] physically and mentally.

How would you describe the [illegible] operation?

At the time of the operation I described the effect as being like the tide coming in. I thought I noticed a lifting or lightening sensation, accompanied by a silence in the head, a feeling of peacefulness or relaxation. I also began to notice a change in my dreams as they became less anxious, and in fact neurotic symptoms in general became less dominant.

Is the operation [illegible] me through it?

It's important from the outset to make a distinction between trepanation and [illegible] nation. The risks associated with self-trepanation are too obvious to need [illegible] Indeed, it is something the Trust very much to recommend. However, is [illegible] trepanned by a qualified, competent [illegible] the procedure is very safe. In fact [illegible] is safer than a lot of surgery. [illegible] local anesthetic and the [illegible] Trepanation involves [illegible] cosmetic surgery. [illegible] trepanation is not nerve [illegible]

moment the surgeon is through the skull. damage to the meninges, the three layers the hospital afterward, and the incision heals very quickly.

[illegible]

[illegible] in the cranial cavity the spinal column. However, holes in the spinal column do, whereas holes in the cranium don't. Certain areas of the cranium are preferable to others, as there are fewer blood [illegible]

[illegible] scar'

[illegible] very few nerve endings in the scalp and skull, and what few there are will be numbed by the anesthetic. Probably the most discomforting aspect of the operation is the [illegible] the skull [illegible] only a few minutes.

[illegible]

[illegible] that the Trepanation Trust has recommended requirements make [illegible] circumstances. The ideal we are working toward [illegible] and testing, can then be referred to a clinic to be trepanned, just as they might be referred to [illegible] himself. The various unsuccessful efforts were [illegible] skull, he was successful and remains [illegible]

[illegible] by many [illegible] the local professions how skull bone [illegible] the human body, [illegible]. What is certain is that some scar tissue will form on the freshly cut surfaces of the skull, thereby thickening up the edges of the hole but not closing it. However, the [illegible] and the [illegible] the hole, is something that needs to be investigated. In general terms, a solid object without a hole in it will be stronger than one with a hole. However, bearing in mind how small the hole is (7–9 mm) and how thick skull bone is, it's hard to imagine how the skull's structural soundness could suffer in any meaningful way. I'm sometimes asked if I'd be frightened of walking through a jungle and being spiked by a thorn. The answer is "not at all." However, if you were unlucky enough to be stabbed in the head with a long pointed object right on the spot of the trepanation, then, yes, the hole would make a difference. Otherwise, it wouldn't.

[Personality Test]

INQUIRE WITHIN

[illegible] a complex [illegible] psychometric test by Kent [illegible] a computer-based application to [illegible] company with 2,[illegible] employees. The test was submitted for review in a [illegible] person class action [illegible] that [illegible] was settled for $2 million last July. The test consists of 502 true-false statements; twelve "deviations" constitute a failing grade. After barely passing the exam, Scott Hadley, a former manager overseeing nine stores, was forced to [illegible] Scott Hadley. But I'm All I've Got.

I take too many medicines.
My hands and feet are usually warm enough.
[illegible]
I am rarely troubled by constipation.
[illegible]
I would like to be a singer.
[illegible]
I have had [illegible] and strange experiences.
[illegible]
It would be better if almost all laws were thrown away.
[illegible]
I have had no difficulty in starting or holding

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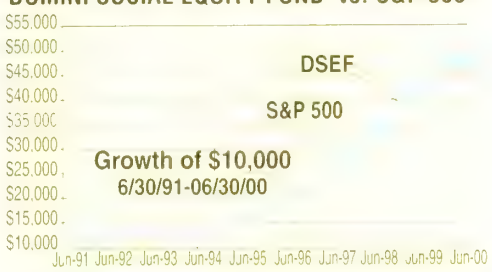
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[The Chevy driver continues]

Ya know the worst thing about this,
ah'm not even sayin' a word but they can't even
ah know it's not for satellite TV
but that they got it pointing right inside
mah head the CIA tew find out what
ah think about them beamed encrypted signals
transmitted from the Godbold's feedmill silo
beaming mah brains up tew the President
who sent the U'S Navy into town
tew place electric wiring between me
and the Presidio County Courthouse statue
which prickly pears transmits it tew the White House
out of the desert when the Pentagon
will tell me that that that the President
that that that that that handgun that that that

Presidio County Courthouse, Marfa, built
in 1886 of native stone
and bricks made locally, three storeys high
with an octagonal tower capped by a dome
on top of which the fancy classical figure
of Justice once held in her outstretched digits
the symbol of her calling but now fingers
only the dusty hot wind out the desert
an irate cowpoke back in history,
quitting the calaboose across the street
(where he'd been held for being drunk),
observed
"There *ain't* no justice in this goddam county,"
and shot the scales plumb out of the goddess's
hand.

The [illegible] Cheapo Liquor,
good Mescal with its rat worm in the lees,
Vegetable matter with teeth like a goddam shark.

[The Mystery Lights, the *ignis fatuus*
that hurteth not, but only feareth fooles,
elucidated by the Chevy driver:]

Ya know, them lights back thar on 90 East,
thays flickern signal messages tew me
most every night straight from the CIA,
thay thay thay thay thay thay thay thay thay thay
thay say thay say ah keep may handgun loaded

In January 1881,
[illegible] to Galveston San Antonio
Southern Pacific Railroads reached this site,
[illegible] and made headquarters which,
[illegible]
had no name. Southern Pacific's Engineer
was married to a woman who aspired
to *higher things* (was reading Dostoevski,
The Brothers Karamazov, 1880);
[illegible] town Marfa, after the local



Untitled (50s, 60s house), 1996, Steve Chapple, acrylic on canvas, 24" square, at the Center for Contemporary Art Museum

retainer of the Karamazov household,
omniscient old Marfa Ignatyevna
who did not see the fall but heard the scream,
the strange, foam-stifled, long familiar scream
of an epileptic falling in a fit

The Lights, demystified by divers eminents:
electrostatic discharge; swamp-gas; moonlight
shining on veins of mica; ghosts of Spanish
Conquistadors who sought gold here; a mirage
produced by cold and hot layers of air
refracting light; *Ya know them Mystery Flickers?,*
well, what it is, the CIA is beaming
encrypted messages from Washington
onto the water tower—ya know, that silver
cylinder that with MARFA writ on?, well,
them coded signals bounce right off the tower
and light up the entire Chinati Mountains
with flicker flicker flicker flicker flicker

US 90 East, Marfa to Alpine
you drive through the volcano of Paisano
just breccia 35 million years old,
caldera, and pale rhyolite, and you.

[The quarterly *Desert Candle* carries this
story of a West Texas Visitation:]

Week before Christmas, 1996
Juanita in her kitchen at Fort Stockton,
making tortillas for her family's dinner,
her mind not on the meal but on her son
(died in the line of Border Patrol duty
some years before) and of how terribly lonely
Christmas would be without him.

When she sat
at table with her family ready to eat,
she served a few tortillas and then noticed
one in particular—"When I went to eat it,
I saw the donkey! I saw the ears and head,
and then the legs, and then I saw the Virgin
Mary riding, holding the Baby Jesus!"

It seemed to her that even in West Texas
Jesus comes visiting sometimes, that in this
Blessed Tortilla was writ the Word of God.
So she has kept this epiphanous tortilla,
which lightened the burden of her grief
somewhat,
and has it still.

When, recently, in Alpine,
the *Desert Candle* made a photocopy
of the tortilla, the contrast in the print
clarified the image enough to see
well, look for yourselves, examine the tortilla:
the *burro*, Mary, Jesus AND JOSEPH TOO!

To the Editor, the *Desert Candle*—Sir,
your article concerning the tortilla
with revelatory powers was no big deal.
I have at home a partially cooked chapati
showing a living likeness of the Buddha;
great Krishna limned in a popadam; a nacho
clearly depicting Jupiter enthroned;
Muhammad's profile on a Hershey Bar;
and Lord Vaapus in a blueberry muffin.

[Story]

SALT

A woman lived here who murdered her children with salt. Joyce. She didn't come from [illegible]. She spent fifteen [illegible] she came to the Island.

Her children were one and three, two girls. She didn't set out to murder them. She didn't [illegible]. What [illegible].

The little one didn't sleep. She simply [illegible] the older girl [illegible] mother. "Four thousand seven hundred and eighty-four. Four thousand seven hundred and eighty-five."

[illegible] Wait. Listen. Then infinitely slowly, put down [illegible]

Nine times out of ten, as she inched toward [illegible] for about an hour. Then she [illegible]

rattling the bars of her crib, calling, babbling, crying. If Joyce tried to ignore her and remained slumped on the soggy sofa, the crying became wailing became shrieking, and the crone next door began knocking on the wall with her stick, and the older girl clutched Joyce's legs and shouted, "Naughty! Naughty! Naughty!" and the walls of the room throbbed in and out with every exhaling shriek and indrawn breath, and the band of suffocation tightened over Joyce's chest.

When the child slept, Joyce slept; sometimes sitting propped against the wall by the crib; sometimes sprawled on the sofa; sometimes curled on the older girl's narrow bed with the bedclothes twisted into a plait beneath the pair of them.

She gave salt to the older girl to punish her. It was morning and she was at the sink, quietly washing yesterday's dishes, running through in her mind what she might be able to do if the baby slept on. After the dishes she might have a bath; she would gather up the dirty clothes and put them in the machine. She would take the bin down and empty it, if the baby slept, maybe even sweep the floor. Outside there was watery sunshine, a gleam of hope on the wet black tarmac.

Then the older girl fell off a chair. She'd been standing on it, leaning forward over the table to reach a crayon that had rolled—went to set her foot back down on the seat and missed it—fell sprawling sideways, pulling the chair over on top of herself, screaming with fright and shock. Instant stereo from the bedroom.

Joyce picks the fallen girl up by the scruff of the neck; plonks her on the righted chair; bawls into her face.

"Now look what you've bloody done."

The girl sits sniveling; from the bedroom the screams get louder. Joyce buries her face in her arms folded on the work surface; at last raises her eyes and focuses on: SALT. Before she's thought she's poured a slug through its Saxa red funnel into her daughter's mug; half-filled with water, stirred till the cloud's dispersed. "Here." Slamming it on the table. "Drink that. That'll teach you." The girl sips and puts it down carefully. "DRINK IT!" "Don't like it." "I don't give a fuck what you bloody well like. DRINK IT." The little girl picks up the mug and drinks. When she is half done she starts to retch. Her mother picks her up and takes her to the bathroom, stands her in the bath. "Puke there if you're going to puke."

The coughing subsides.

"Now get out of my way. Get."

The girl scrabbles out of the bath and runs to her bed. She gets in and pulls the covers up.



e nuevas humillaciones ... *Museum in Madrid*

Joyce stumbles to her room and grabs the screaming baby.

At first it was a punishment. Something she could make them both do that they didn't like. Force the girl to drink it. Put it in the baby's bottle and let her gulp until she tasted it. Give her something to scream for, that would.

Then she noticed it made them sleep. That first morning, the girl stayed in her bed till noon. If they drank enough to make them vomit, it exhausted them and they slept even more. Or it gave them stomachaches, and they lay whimpering quietly, squirming in their beds, unable to run around or bellow.

The baby'd drink it without a fuss, mixed in juice. With the older one, she and the girl both knew it was punishment. For making a noise. For spilling something. For being clumsy or untidy or simply in the way. For being. And she was big enough to say no, to go without a drink. Joyce slapped her away from the taps and the fridge. When she drank her dirty bath water Joyce started putting salt in that.

It was never intended to kill them. She didn't know it could. Just wanted to teach them a lesson. Teachin[illegible] their own good. Joyce had [illegible] lessons. She'd learned "I want" doesn't get, and nothing in this world [illegible] She'd learned not to get above herself and not to ask for the moon. She'd learned money doesn't grow on trees. She'd learned [illegible] a vale of tears. Valuable lessons, [illegible] learned by young children. Joyce was helping them to learn. Helping them not to be like herself; so desperately furiously suffocatingly trapped, so caged and raging, so dissatisfied. They were born bad. [illegible] to teach them to be otherwise.

When the [illegible] twitching [illegible] of water, Joyce watched with tearful sympathy, then [illegible] undressed her. Put [illegible] so much [illegible] it now [illegible] Poor little [illegible] Poor little [illegible] the rotten [illegible] their own [illegible]

They floated gently as ice in the black water, bumping and nudging in to shore. But in the morning when she looked they were gone; there was only the brown seaweed bobbing to the surface and the occasional gray-backed gull.

Salt preserves and salt destroys. All life sprang from the salt soup of the sea, but her children are dead as rocks and hang as heavy about her heart. It was a madness, an accident, an impossibility. How can there be a thing done which can never never be undone? How, in a botched and transitory life, can one thing become irrevocable? All the rest of her life is void. It was all waiting to become that and living to regret it. Clouds and sea spume are the color of salt; sea air keeps the taste of it in her mouth: even here, there is no escape.

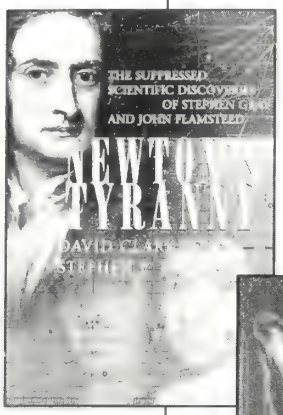
Then one frosty salt-grained night there's scrabbling at her propped-up door; scrabbling and snuffling and shuddering sobs. Head still full of salt-mummies, she stumbles to the glassless window and leans out. A young girl is battering weakly on the door, fists upraised, hair salt-silver in the moonlight. "Here," Joyce calls. Her voice has scarcely worked for sixteen years. The girl comes blindly to the window—Joyce helps her over the sill, leads her to her matted pile of bedding, wraps her in a blanket. When the girl has snuffled and burrowed herself to sleep, Joyce lies beside her, curling her body around the warm question mark of the girl's blanketed back.

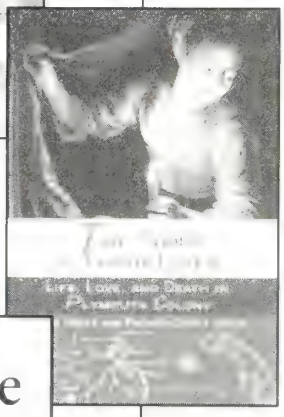
It is no mystery where she comes from. She's the younger daughter of old McBride, who that night had tried with her what he'd been doing with her older sister the past five years. Only the nine-year-old did not lie sickened and still but fought like a cat, scratched him to bleeding, and ran two dark miles to the safety of the nearest dwelling: Joyce's. And there she stayed. Walking down to get the boat for school, and back in the evening to Joyce's cottage. When McBride was out fishing she fetched her things from his house, and two of his six geese that she said were hers. They kept them in the ruined front room and they made fine watchdogs. She showed Joyce how to collect winkles, and where the blackberries were. They ate no salt.

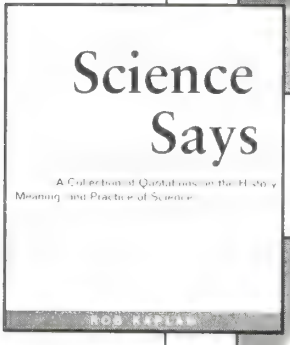
And when Joyce sit staring out to sea in the evening, the girl colored in her exercise book on the flat rock beside her; or if it was wet, they sat either side of the driftwood fire and made up spooky stories. Joyce never spoke of her children, not the girl of her father. This was their life. And when Joyce lay curled around her island-daughter's sleeping back, she had no more dreams of saltchildren, but dreamed instead she was at the prow of a boat, with the warm sun on her face and chest, sailing forward into the light. ■

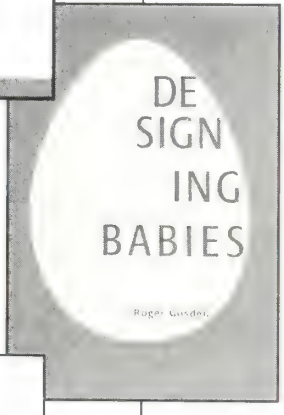
Just think.

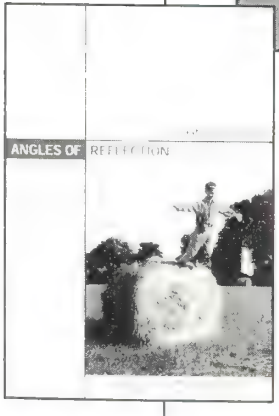
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FORTUNE'S SMILE

Betting big at the World Series of Poker

By James McManus

I flew in on American Airlines, the nickname for two pocket aces, and I take that as a very good sign. I've got my poker books, sunglasses, and lucky hats, including the White Sox cap I got married in. My room at Binion's Horseshoe overlooks downtown Las Vegas's dolorous, last-gasp attempt to keep up with the billion-dollar resorts five miles south on the Strip, which in the last few years have siphoned off most of the city's 34 million annual tourists with pixilated facsimiles of Paris and Bellagio, Imperial Rome and Renaissance Venice—all the more reason to be happily ensconced way up here at the Horseshoe. Even better this evening is that the 2000 World Series of Poker is in full swing downstairs. Tomorrow, with a $4,000 stake, I'm going to try to win a seat in the million-dollar championship event, due to begin in five days.



I ain't superstitious, as Willie Dixon once sang, but my second daughter, Beatrice, was conceived in Bellagio, Italy, so my lucky hats include a sun visor sporting the logo of the local version. I've also been playing poker for thirty-nine years now, everything from penny-ante family games in the Bronx to $80–$160 hold'em at the Bellagio, but never at anything close to this level. The championship event costs $10,000 to enter, and always draws the top two or three hundred pros in the world. I'm good, but not that good. I was taught by my uncle and grandfather, both named Tom Madden, then got schooled in caddy shacks by guys with names like Doc and Tennessee. My current home game in Chicago involves day-traders, attorneys, a transit-systems planner, and a pizza delivery man. It's a game that I fare pretty well in, but I still have no reason to doubt T. J. Cloutier, the former Canadian Football League tight end who is now one of poker's best players, when he says: "The World Series is a conglomeration of local champions. There's no blow from low-ego who's the champion in his game at home; hundreds of local champions like him come to Vegas to play the World Series. But it's like the difference in game [illegible] playing [illegible] football [illegible] ball. It's a step up."

To reduce the long odds that I'll only embarrass myself, I've spent the last year practicing on a computer while studying the four poker bibles Cloutier's *Championship No-Limit & Pot-Limit Hold'em*, cowritten with Tom McEvoy, the 1983 world champion; David Sklansky's seminal *Theory of Poker* and *Hold'em Poker for Advanced Players*, the latter cowritten with Mason Malmuth; and Doyle Brunson's *Super/System: A Course in Power Poker*, cowritten with (among others) Sklansky, Chip Reese, and Bobby Baldwin, the [illegible] champion and currently president of the Bellagio—which [illegible]

James McManus's most recent books are [illegible] *and* [illegible]*. His last article for* Harper's Magazine*,* "[illegible]"

little yellow horseshoes on the sham-

This [illegible] monument to [illegible] forty-[illegible] poker tables surrounded by ten or [illegible] decks. The [illegible] grammar school gym, [illegible] feet high with [illegible] cameras and monitors but not quite enough ventilation for the number of players who smoke.



Posters along the walls give results from previous events, including a color photograph of each winner. There's precious little else in the way of [illegible] to muse [illegible] besides the droning announcements of poker activity and locust-like clacking of chips. Shangri-la!

The $3,000 no-limit hold'em event starts tomorrow at noon, so that's when I'll play my first [illegible] while the best two or three hundred players are otherwise engaged. Before I go to bed, though, I need to take a few notes on the action. In satellites for the Big One, ten people pay $1,000 apiece and play a winner-take-all freeze-out. Which will make me a 9–1 underdog tomorrow, assuming I'm evenly matched with my [illegible] and of course I will not be. But a night's sleep and diluted competition will give me [illegible].

[illegible] have $300 buy-ins and [illegible] event, but one table [illegible] $1,500 action. [illegible] all the most [illegible] Silence town [illegible] have chips stacked in front of them, along with their Walkmans and water bottles, ashtrays and [illegible]. [illegible] this [illegible] I can query [illegible] and [illegible] Shoot the [illegible] flag [illegible].

I almost go into convulsions. Heat heat! Do [illegible] sit, totaling over $1,015, the $15 being the p[illegible] Tired schmired. Once I receive my own $1[illegible] stack of green ($25) and brown ($100) chips [illegible] the dealer starts shuffling, I've never felt [illegible] ready.

Hold'em involves nine or ten players recei[illegible] two facedown cards each (called "the pock[illegible] followed by three faceup shared, or "commun[illegible] cards ("the flop"), a fourth community card ([illegible] turn," or "fourth street"), and a fifth commu[illegible] card ("the river," or "fifth street"). Two rota[illegible] antes called "blinds," small and large, initia[illegible] round of betting before the flop, with a roun[illegible] betting after the flop, after fourth street, an[illegible] ter fifth street. Starting at $25 and $50, the b[illegible] double every twenty minutes. Since the ga[illegible] no-limit, a player may bet anything from $5[illegible] to all his chips at any point in the sequence. [illegible] limit action seldom reaches a showdown on [illegible] street, where, if it did, the best five-card p[illegible] hand wins. Most often, an intimidating w[illegible] before or just after the flop gets no callers, an[illegible] bettor receives the whole pot.

Things get much trickier when factors [illegible] your position. Acting last from the dealer's s[illegible] tion (which rotates hand by hand) is the stro[illegible] position, since you see everyone else's ac[illegible] before deciding whether to fold, call, or raise [illegible] can therefore get away with playing sli[illegible] weaker hands; whereas only big pairs, ace-k[illegible] or suited connecting face cards (Q♠J♦, to[illegible] ample) are likely to make money played fro[illegible] early position. As early shades clockwise [illegible] middle, then late position, the valences of [illegible] gering assert themselves and less savvy pl[illegible] get soundly outmaneuvered.

My satellite rivals are mostly middle-aged [illegible] of all stripes: the anxious, the collected [illegible] pocky, the sleek, ex-beatniks, ex-jocks, an[illegible] hippies. So I feel right at home on all counts [illegible] though one of us will stroll off with ever[illegible] else's money, the table has a friendly, if not [illegible] munificent, vibe. When someone gets edg[illegible] the showdown, the usual response is, "G[illegible] hand." We also up the cocktail waitress to [illegible] another. None of this fools me, however.

A gray-haired Vietnamese woman in r[illegible] mirrored shades has taken the lead, winning [illegible] of the first eleven pots. Doing less well i[illegible] toothless varmint in seat one, just to the left [illegible] dealer. His scraggly beard starts high on his ch[illegible] bones and covers his Adam's apple, with [illegible] hint of similar aspect, the entire gnarled pac[illegible] tentatively winched together by a powder [illegible] UNLV cap. Yours truly sports poker face, t[illegible] sun shades, and Bellagio visor but still hasn[illegible] tered one pot. Him too scared.

Most of my no-limit experience is on Mas[illegible] World Series of Poker program and Bob [illegible]

Tournament Texas Hold'em. By playing reds of thousands of hands (and winning virtual tournaments), I've sharpened my ense and money-management skills, and deed a not-bad sense of no-limit wagering ms. Yet computer play affords no opportuo read faces and body language for "tells," may actually diminish the mental, fiscal, physical stamina required for live-action r. The $1,015 I'm risking is real, with 9–1 that I'll lose every cent. I can't sit here with and Brunson and Sklansky open in my lap, bing an index or two for advice about play n unsuited ace-jack. The most important thing here is feel, and for this, books and com's can't help much. Right now the pot has raised by the muscular Arab in the salt ed tortoiseshell Wayfarers, not Masque's er #4." What is Stains thinking that I'm ing that he's thinking? Is his visceral aplomb ract? The only things I'm sure of is that he s my money more than Player #4 ever could that he's already knocked out Madame Ho. I can't look into his eyes, at least I can obhow hard his lungs are working. If I've d him right, I can feel it.

ght now from middle position I'm playing ♥, having called Stains's $200 preflop raise. flop has come ace, five, king—all of spades flushes abroad, there's a bet and three calls d of me. That no one has raised makes my pot about 12–1, with my shot at a full house a orse than one in thirteen. But I call, God s why, and fourth street comes up J♠, giv ne aces and jacks. After Stains bets another , two hands get folded, but the guy on the n reraises. Two other calls on my right, then d, then . . . the next thing I know the dealer ring at me. So is Stains. So is the Pakistani to his left. With only four outs (the two re aining aces and jacks), folding aces-up makes me n with irrational pride, but when the dealer ts over J♣, I no longer have a good feeling. need to take a piss about now, but I hold it, the poker gods deem fit to reward me. Fifteen ls go by in which I can do no wrong. I win six l-sized pots; three in a row toward the end, us check-raises, semi-bluffs, traps—the whole s. By midnight I have $4,900, almost half chips on the table. The slender Pakistani guy, 's named Hasan Habib, has roughly $2,700; a bearded guy named Tom Jacobs about $2,400. ith the blinds at $400 and $800, Jacobs es all-in on the third hand we play. Habib , turning over two sevens. (In heads-up ac , when one player goes all-in usually both expose their hole cards since no more betting possible.) When Jacobs flips over A-K, Habib comes in 11-9 favorite, and I get to watch the fi or the "race" from the sideline. 11-3, followed by a trey, then a deuce. I'm down to one adversary. The only problem is that it's Hasan Habib, who finished second last month at the World Poker Open no-limit event down in Tunica, Mississippi. And he now has me slightly outchipped.

We fence for a half dozen hands, neither of us willing to call preflop bets, before I discover a pair of queens peering back up between my thumbs. Betting first, I can try to trap Hasan by (1) merely calling his big blind, (2) putting in a modest raise, or (3) moving all-in, hoping that he (a) calls, and (b) doesn't have aces or kings. I decide to try door number three. And he calls, then puts the frighteners on me by turning over K♦ and . . . 10♦. When the board fails to improve either of our hands, the dealer yells, "Winner on table 64!" Yawning yet flabbergasted, I sit back and try to relax. Carol takes my name and address, then issues a printed receipt for $10,001, the last buck being the token entry fee. *Event 25*, it says, *World Championship, 5/15/2000*, and assigns me to Table 53, Seat 6. I'm in.

Besides drawing record numbers of entries, the 2000 WSOP, I've discovered, has already produced a few of what might be called cultural achievements. The $1,500 seven-stud bracelet, along with the $135,975 first prize, went to Jerri Thomas, a forty-one-year-old from Cincinnati who had given birth only three months earlier. She and her husband, Harry, are now only the second married couple with a WSOP bracelet apiece. The following event, limit Omaha, was won by Ivo Donev, a former chess pro from Austria who'd spent the past two years reading Sklansky and

RANKING OF POKER HANDS

Straight Flush: five consecutive cards of the same suit, such as 8♥ 9♥ 10♥ J♥ Q♥. The highest possible hand is an ace-high straight flush, called a *royal flush*.

Four of a Kind: four cards of the same rank, such as 10♣ 10♦ 10♠ 10♥.

Full House: three cards of one rank and two of another, such as three fives and two queens.

Flush: five cards of the same suit, such as 2♦ 5♦ 7♦ J♦ A♦.

Straight: five consecutive cards of mixed suits, such as 5♣ 6♦ 7♠ 8♥ 9♠. (In a straight, an ace can be used as either a high or a low card.)

Three of a Kind: three cards of the same rank, such as 6♦ 6♣ 6♥.

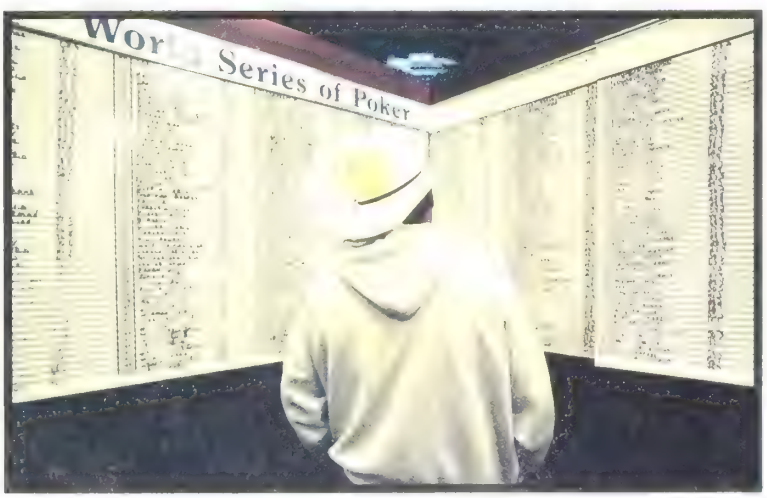
Two Pairs: two cards of the same rank and two other cards of another rank, such as Q♦ Q♣ and 9♦ 9♥.

Pair: two cards of the same rank, such as 4♦ 4♣.

A poker tournament in which hands of the hands discussed in this article have been recon. Individual accounts of hands others can recall

steep degree of difficulty, the event drew only thirty entrants, but the deuce (in which the low-[illegible] covet almost as much as the Big One. No satel-[illegible] can the cockiest, best-bankrolled players compete. Harman, [illegible] thirty-two-ish, longtime gamme who plays high-stakes lowball games every night with the likes of Brunson, Chip Reese, and Stanley Dube, but she'd never played no-limit hold'em. Neither had Duke, for that matter, but that didn't faze either of them. They took a ten-minute lesson from Howard Lederer, Duke's brother, and ten hours later Harman had the bracelet and $146,250. And then, on May 5, Phillip Ivey took home the Omaha bracelet, defeating Thomas "Amarillo Slim" Preston with a series of fifth-street miracles at the final table, [illegible] back from a 3-1 chip deficit. In thirty years of World Series play, during which he's won four bracelets, Slim had never lost at a final table. Playing out of Atlantic City, the twenty-three-year-old Ivey has been on the tournament circuit for less than six months. But is now the only African American with a WSOP bracelet.

The World Series of Poker (and tournament poker in general) was invented by Benny Binion in the [illegible] 1970s. He simply invited a few of



went on the talk-show circuit, boosting the p lic's interest in tournament poker. By the t Brunson became the second repeat champio 1977, first prize had quadrupled to $340,00 was up to $700,000 by 1988, the second Johnny Chan won. From 1991 until last y first prize was an even $1 million, with the n ber of entries and total prize money steadily cli ing. Last year's championship event drew entries, with second place paying a rec $768,625. Almost from the WSOP's incepti the total prize money awarded has dwarfed purses of Wimbledon, the Masters, and the K tucky Derby. There are now twenty-four prel inary events. The buy-in to the Big One rem $10,000, but these days the majority of play gain entry by winning satellites or super-sa lites, mini-tournaments designed to democra the competition; they are also thought to be most legitimate route in, since they reward p er skill instead of deep pockets, tho the two often work hand in hand.

T minus seventy minutes, and counting. ter half an hour of lazy backstroke in the roo pool, I open my Clouttier and start cramming my first big exam since I was an undergrad tw ty-seven years ago. I'm reviewing all twelve T.J.'s practice hands, poring over underli phrases to see if I've absorbed the logic of analyses. "Cardinal rule number one in no-li hold'em is: If you limp with aces, you will ne get broke with aces." And this, on the luck f tor: "You can set up all the plays in the world, can play perfectly on a hand, and you can still l And there's nothing that you can do about The rest of his advice I've tried to reduce to f memorizable aphorisms.

1. Don't call big bets; fold or raise.

2. Avoid trouble hands like K♦Q♣, K♥J♣ any ace with a kicker smaller than a king in first four positions.

3. Don't always steal-raise in obvious bluff positions (the small blind, the button), and p big hands (even A♦A♣) slowly from them.

4. Drawing hands are death.

This last one means: Don't risk your tour ment life chasing big pairs with small ones medium suited connectors, as is often correc a limit game. You'd win a big pot if you fil your straight or flush, but aggressive no-li players make you pay too high a price to d against them. Mistakes in no-limit tend to [illegible] order of magnitude, and the c that you lose in a tournament can't be replenis by digging into your pocket. Amen.

Furious satellite action is still underway as I rive in the tournament area just before no [illegible] event a crowd getting denser by the ond. Juding from their faces, a few of these h

GLOSSARY OF POKER TERMS

all-in: *having all one's chips in the pot*
belly draw: *a straight that lacks an inside card*
Big Slick: *ace-king*
boss trips: *the highest possible three of a kind*
button: *disc that rotates clockwise around the table to indicate which player is the last to bet*
crying call: *a call with a hand you think has a small chance of winning*
flop: *the first three exposed community cards, dealt simultaneously*
freeroll: *to compete with other people's money*
johnnies: *jacks*
kicker: *a side card accompanying a higher card or cards*
muck: *to discard or fold*
rainbow: *a flop of three different suits*
semi-bluff: *to bet with a hand you don't think is the best hand but which has a reasonable chance of improving to the best hand*
slow-play: *to check or call an opponent's bet with a big hand in order to win more money in later betting rounds*
smooth call: *a call when a raise is expected*
steal: *a bet big enough to cause your opponents to fold, especially when your own hand is weak*
suck out: *to make a lucky draw on fifth street, especially with a hand you should have folded earlier*
wheel:*a five-high straight, such as A-2-3-4-5.*

s have been playing all night. Dealers raise
th betting levels every three minutes instead of
ry twenty, eliminating players *tout de suite* but
ducing the caliber of poker to little better than
a in crapshoots. Railbirds are six or eight deep,
oping and whistling when their hombre sur-
ves, as four camera crews roam the aisles. One
g they're focusing on is tournament director Bob
Tompson, a silver-haired cowboy with a dul-
c basso drawl. With his big jaw and narrow-eyed
ge, he effortlessly personifies the American
West, Texas hold'em in particular. And that's
what we came here to play: cowboy poker.
Tompson runs the floor with his son, Robert, and
Tim Elias; his daughter, Cathi Wood, coordi-
nates the administration. Her fact sheet says that
five hundred entrants sign up, nine players
more than the usual thirty-six will be paid; first
pace will pay $1.5 million, second will pay almost
$800,000, and all other payouts will escalate. Her
father just announced that last year's record of 393
has been shattered, then pointed to the line of
new entrants with ten grand in their pocket still
snaking three-players thick out the door. Clear-
ly no cards will be in the air for a spell.

In the meantime, Puggy Pearson, the 1973
champion, holds court in a gold-and-lemon silk
Genghis Khan outfit, including a crown with tas-
seled earflaps to go with his broad smile, epony-
mous pug nose, and Abe Lincoln mustacheless
beard. Elsewhere I see little black dresses, tuxe-
dos, and a short, wild-eyed black guy in a cloth
Iranian's helmet hung with a dozen pink or yel-
low rabbit's feet. The leading sartorial choice,
though, is Poker Practical: baseball cap, sun-
glasses, sateen casino jacket. Among so many
corn-fed middle-aged guys in goatees and Levi's,
Tom still looks clear-eyed and rangy at seventy-
seven, bedecked in pressed khaki trousers, plat-
inum belt buckle, mother-of-pearl buttons on his
crisp cowboy shirt.

However unlikely this sounds, the World Se-
ries of Poker has evolved from its good-old-boy
roots into a stronghold of, yes, functional multi-
culturalism, proving, if nothing else, that there is
such a thing. The field is an ecumenical crazy
quilt of players from twenty-three countries on all
six inhabited continents, among them Scotty
Nguyen (the gold-bedecked 1998 champion)
from Saigon, Hasan Habib from Karachi, and,
from Pamplona, a Carlos Fuentes. Any all-name
team would also have to include Tab Thiptin-
dokon, Jesus Ferguson, Exxon Feyznia, David
Plastik, Chip Jett, Spring Cheong, Sam Grizzle,
Men Poon Wang, and Huckleberry Seed, the 1996
champion. Among toned jocks like Seed and
Wayne Flack and Daniel Negreanu we have equal
numbers of the obese and the skeletal, plus plen-
ty of folks who are youthful or ancient, wheel-
chair-bound or in dance shoes. Evangelical Chris-
tians are competing with Larry Flynt, CEOs and
dot-com millionaires against call girls and poker
dealers, gay men and lesbians, cowgirls and golfers
and artists, black poker professionals and Jewish
physicians, Jewish pros and black docs, at least one
Aramaic scholar, and several Vietnamese boat
people. All told our number is 512, breaking last
year's record by 119 and bringing the purse to a
staggering $5.12 million.

I fail to recognize any stars at my table, cause
enough for slightly less pessimism. After show-
ing our receipts we each receive a stack of $10,000
in chips: one orange five-thousand, three white-
and-royal-blue "dimes," two black and yellow
five-hundreds, and seven slate-colored "ones"
topped by a dozen green "quarters." The cards fi-
nally go in the air at 1:55, with the blinds at $25
and $50, no antes. Our dealer flicks out a card
apiece to determine who starts on the button
and, with the sad-eyed king of spades, that would
be *moi*. On the first hand, I look down and find
A♣6♣. No less than two limpers in front of me,
so, they call the big blind by tossing $50 each in
to the pot, trying to get a cheap look at the flop.
Not on *moi*'s watch. I make it $250 to go, get no
callers, and, with $10,325, take the lead.

Not for long, of course. I start playing far too
impulsively, overriding my own blueprint by en-
tering pots with small pairs, K♥J♦, or 5♥4♥,
getting smoked by someone else pushing my chips
in or making my mouth say, "Let's raise it"? The



over kings. More important, I've persuaded r
chips to the last to fold all my trouble hands. W
my new leather ass and my talismans, I man
to hang around until the nine o'clock dinn
break when I've scratched my way up to $16,4
I dash to my room, call Jennifer again in St. Lo
and brag. And she lets me.

Back at the poker table, I grab myself by
collar and demand that I wait for big hands in
but the last three positions; and I listen. But i
escalating blinds and a stretch of cold cards g
my stack down to $13,825 by midnight. We're
at Level 4, anteing $25 a hand with $100
$200 blinds. Down to $11,700, I can't wait fo
ever for a hand. With the blinds at $200–$
and $50 antes, it's costing me $1,050 a ro
just to sit here and fold all my rags. But finally, o
off the button, I peek between my knuckles
discover J♥|♦. Ooh la la. Raising to $1,000. I
three callers, and the flop comes K-J-8 rainbo
I even with the overcard (king) and all these d
callers, I bet $1,500. Seat seven folds, but
Japanese yuppie in seat eight makes it $3,
Then the shaved head in one cold-calls $
bets. Jesus Christ! It's gonna cost me every
chip to keep playing this hand, and without
mortal nuts. (At this point, a "set" of three kin
I'm petrified of set over set; even worse are the
vious straight draws. Yet if I don't get my ch
in with this hand, when am I going to? Neve
decide, as I call, then watch fourth street co
darling, a beautissimous, a sideways-infinity
providing my first full house of the day—m
days, actually. I nudge the rest of my chips
inches forward. "All-in." Japan meditates on
options for a minute, then folds, flashing
pieces in disgust. Sayonara! Shaved Head, h
ever, smooth-calls me. Since I'm all-in, no furt
betting is possible, so we both turn over our
cards. His are 10♣9♣, not the cowboys or
other two eights, so it's over: any straight
might make will still lose to jacks full of eight
a full house. The pot comes to $36,900. Stack
it next to my brag book, I'd love nothing be
than to trudge off to bed, but we still have fi
two minutes left at Level 5. I order hot choco
and sit tight, once folding pocket sevens fi
middle position even though no one had ra
yet. Me solid!

Tom Thompson calls a halt to our marc
nine after two. Sheets are passed around w
players record our chip count. Mine come
$35,325. Tom Elias recounts them, signs
sheet, stuffs chips and sheet into a Ziploc bag,
ples it shut. Done. Still alive. It's too late to
my gains, but my rush while it lasted—
[illegible] has deadened my heart as much as
[illegible] tablet, a narcotic or shot glass of s
[illegible] much as any three of those thi

ough it still takes 150mg of Trazodone washed down by room service cabernet to finally fall off, I'm so wired.

Tuesday morning, after thirty-six laps in the pool, a fast shower, room service oatmeal and all in the service of tuning my nerves, muscles and glucose, I arrive back downstairs to the satisfaction of my name on page one of the five-page, single-spaced leader board. Two hundred fifteen still have chips, and my $35,325 is good for thirty-eighth place. With par at 823,933, this puts me in pretty good shape, though Mehul Choudhari, the leader, has me almost tripled with 92,500. My satellite rivals, Hasan and Tom, are in fifth and sixteenth, respectively. Rising star Kathy Liebert is seventh, T.J. nineteenth, Noel Hoang right above me in thirty-sixth. Bunched near the middle are Hayden, Duke, Enright, and Mike Sexton, runner-up to Chan in 1988. All of those folks are my heroes.

By the end of today we'll have to lose 169 more of us, but every survivor will be guaranteed at least $15,000. Am I ready for this? Maybe not. My first big mistake is walking pocket kings, failing to protect them by raising in hopes of building a pot, then getting caught by a straight on the river. Exactly when, I have to wonder, did I become a person on whom everything is lost? This game is *designed* to blast draws from the battlefield, imbecile! Down to $28,000, I resolve, for the fifteenth time, to play solid poker—to stay out of pots until I find what Sklansky calls the Group 1 or 2 hands (aces or kings down through suited KQ), then attack. For the next ninety minutes, it works. I also manage, from later positions, to slip into a few unraised pots with suited connectors, two of which turn into flushes. Bottom line? Ninety-eight grand. If I hadn't wasted a call with A♣3♣ on the previous hand, I'd now have the magic one large.

After dinner I get moved to seat two of a table with Hasan in seat one, J. J. Bortner in three, Kathy Liebert in four, Mickey Appleman in six, and Daniel Negreanu in eight. Scary, but also more fun. Bortner keeps a plastic baby rattler corded atop her stacks that she's quite fond of shoving toward the pot, snake and all. Appleman is one of the game's veteran pros and melancholy philosophers. He used to work with alcoholics in Harlem, but he's been on the pro poker circuit for twenty-five years now. He's wearing a white Massada baseball cap over his ash-blond Groucho Marx moptop, and losing. The goateed Negreanu is whippet thin under his Sharks jersey and ultimatebet.com hat. Fresh off a win at the L.A. Poker Championship, he's brimming with confidence and confidence. "Let's be honest here," he tells Hasan, after a flop comes off A♣7♠7♥. "You've got the seven. Why walk it?" As Hasan tries to keep a straight face, Daniel grabs a dozen orange chips, winds up like he's getting ready to throw a left hook, and tosses the chips into the pot, which he goes on to win with A♦5♣.

With sixty players left, I'm back to $82,000, so I play extra tight for a stretch, hoping for a monster I can sit on these big shots. The leaders are Duke, Liebert, Habib, and a guy called Captain Tom Franklin, all with around a quarter of a million in chips. With the blinds at $1,500–$3,000 and $500 antes, it's costing me nine grand per round. So the last thing I'm in the mood for is a photo op, but here, as the cameras shark in, we have Slim standing up behind Liebert, holding a butcher knife to his throat. Turns out that back in 1972 Slim reportedly threatened to cut his throat if a woman ever won the tournament. (What he said was that he'd do it if a particular woman won, but the misquote makes much better copy.) I'm sure Kathy wants to concentrate on poker, but she's being a pretty good sport, though I'd be smiling, too, if I had big straight white teeth and $270,000 in front of me.



THOMAS "AMARILLO SLIM" PRESTON.

With a dozen eliminations to go till we reach forty-five, I basically hang around for two hours, actively avoiding confrontations. Doesn't work. By the time we're down to the sixty-seven, I have only $36,000 left, almost exactly where I started the day. But if I can only survive two more antes, I'll not only be good for $15,000 but will be in a freeroll for the $1.5 million.

At this stage we're forced to play hand for hand, holding up the next shuffle until all six tables complete the previous hand, this to keep short stacks from stalling. My tablemates are clearly not relishing confrontation, but when the player at the eight seat goes out, he's replaced by—oh, shit—T. J. Cloutier. It gets worse. More than content to just sit here and wait, I'm made to act early and to a series of make-or-break bluffs. The first one comes when, one off the button, I find A♣J♥. Two players already raised it to $5,000, and both the tanned, blond cowboy in mine and Hasan behind me look like *I don't call bets.* I commit to the pot. Yet I'm also aware that strong players target weak



getup: full beard and yard-long auburn locks under black cowboy hat slung low over wraparound shades. "Still have chips?" he asks cordially. I tell him. What about you?" I guess I'm doing all right. Hey, good luck." Heading out after washing our hands, I notice that his feet are adorned with elegant little black dancer's shoes. Strange! Before I sit back down, I try to survey the other five tables. Jacobs and Duke have big stacks, though Liebert still rules the whole tournament. The tiniest stacks are at my table, where Appleman is down to $4,500. Another round of blinds and he's through.

Three hands later I flop two pair in a heads-up pot with Hasan and get elated all over again—until Hasan sets me all-in. The two diamonds on board are what scares me. If he makes his flush while I fail to improve, it'll be I going out instead of Appleman, and in the worst of all possible places. I've put Hasan on flush draw and inferred that he's semi-bluffing before his own hand gets made—or does not. Only a fool wouldn't do so with those scary-looking diamonds out there, and Hasan is no fool. So I call. And my sevens and sixes hold up, doubling me through to $78,000.

During the next break I notice that Andy Ceiver, the *Detroit Free Press* gaming columnist, is talking to Jesus. When I introduce myself and ask for a cigarette, it turns out that neither of them smokes. I tell Ferguson that I'm shocked in spite of the dance shoes, he looks like a Marlboro Man all the way. In fact, he's a gentle-voiced, part trading wonk with a new Ph.D. in computer science from UCLA who happens to love ballroom dancing; the outfit is "just for disguise." Does he prefer to be called Jesus or Chris? "Both." Ethan? "Either one. I like them both the same." Hell no. Andy now suggests that I might want to ease down at this point. I tell him that the last thing I want is to keep mixing it up, but the table's not giving me much choice. "Plus my hand keeps grabbing the chips and tossing them into—

"Almost as though you've been hypnotized.

"Ri-i-ight . . ."

"We understand perfectly," says Jesus.

With me on the button and Liebert in the big blind, Appleman folds one more hand, leaving him with barely enough to post the next blind. The next player, Roman Abinsay, pushes his entire $10,500 into the pot. Appleman, of course, desperately wants someone to knock out Abinsay in forty-sixth place, but no one ahead of him can call; neither can I, with 7♠4♦. Which leaves it up to Liebert to play sheriff, especially since he already has $3,500 invested in the pot. And that's what she does, calling and turning over K♥9♣. Appleman's long face never once changes expression, even when Abinsay turns over . . . and sighs. The flop comes Q♠7♥3♥, leaving either of the two remaining qu

The turn comes a seven, apparently helping ner
ier of them. When a king comes on fifth street,
ome overexcited railbirds start chirping that
e're done for the night, and I'd love to believe
em. But another quick look at the board makes
clear what Liebert already knows: that
ngs and queens loses to aces and *whatever* pair.
On we play. I'm more determined than ever to
ay on the sidelines. Even when under the gun
find aces, I think about mucking them, but it's
o easy to imagine kicking myself fifteen minutes
om now, let alone fifteen years. Deciding to
alk them, I bet "only" $10,000 and get called by
e cowboy. When the flop comes J♠4♥2♠, I bet
12,000 more, expecting to win a nice pot then
id there, though with part of me hoping he'll
ise. When he smooth-calls again, it finally
awns on me that I may well be trapped by three
cks. Fourth street is 5♥, giving me an inside
raight draw to go with my aces. I can't put the
owboy on anything higher than jacks, since he
ouldn't have called $24,000 with A-3. I almost
efer he has jacks as my right hand picks up fif-
en blue chips, breaking them down into three
lles . . . and Cowboy smooth-calls me *again*!
hank God the river card is 3♠, backdooring me
ito a wheel (giving me, in other words, an un-
pected five-high straight on the final two cards).
o way is Cowboy holding 6-3, and since the
oard hasn't paired, he couldn't have filled his
ree jacks. I check, hoping he'll at least repre-
ut the 6-3 and I can raise him all-in. He had me
apped back there on the flop and the turn, but
ow I believe I have him. When he shows me two
cket jacks, I turn over one ace for the wheel,
id then, for good measure, the other one, which
owboy doesn't seem to appreciate.

All of a sudden I have almost $200,000, second
this table only to Liebert's four large. I'm re-
inding myself to avoid her, in fact, when, back
the button again, I find A♦Q♠. When it gets
ecked around to me, I raise it to $12,000. Af-
r Bortner folds, who else but Liebert reraises
$24,000. She does this, of course, with an ab-
lute minimum of anima. Zero. She could care
ss, she couldn't care less: take your pick. As-
ming again that the big-time pros want to push
e around, but failing for the dozenth time to
ed T.J.'s advice about raising or folding, I call.
e flop of 2♠7♣Q♣ bails me out, in a way. Be-
use when Kathy, the reraiser, taps a slender
's finger to check, I catch a faint whiff of
eck-raise. As the odor becomes more insistent,
overmatched brain seizes up
heckchecka—but my thumb and middle finger
mehow manage to bet $20,000 without even
using to consult with their boss. Kathy stares me
own through my polarized lenses like some chick
er surgeon zinging my capillaries. Do they
noke? Do they twitch? I don't know. The hand
I'd put her on, was a medium pair. I might be
so sure—not that I was sure, mind you—
though I doubt she reraised me pre-flop with J-J
or Q-7. Whatever queen she's playing I've either
tied or outkicked, but what if she's holding
two of them? After weighing and squeezing the
miniature blue-and-white soccer ball for over a
minute, she cuts out a stack of fifteen orange
chips, fondling them as though ready to move
them forward, all the while watching me close-
ly. Zzzt . . . zzzzzzzt . . . I stare away from the table for
ten or twelve seconds, then pointedly look back
at her. I like her a lot, and she knows that.

When she finally mucks, I flash her my Q♠ in
what I hope will be taken as a comradely ges-
ture. "Show one, show all," Abinsay demands. I
pick up both my cards from the edge of the mat
and flip them over. Kathy nods twice but doesn't
look happy. She also makes a point of sliding her
own cards facedown toward the dealer.

Two hands later, after T.J. has raised to
$10,000, I find an eminently foldable A♠5♥. I'm
I can't shake the feeling that my new favorite
author wants to pilfer our antes and blinds. The
longer I think about it the more convinced I be-
come, so I call. My heart thumps—tell signals vis-
ible all over my body—fingers, neck, pupils, com-
plexion—of how nervous I am, so I try to persuade myself that they can also be read as elation, as in, "Yes! I'm finally gonna get T.J.'s chips!" I camouflage my relief when the flop comes A♦3♦2♣, giving me an inside straight draw to go with top pair and pitiful kicker. When T.J. raps his fist on the table I'm convinced I'll be check-raised, but even if he comes back over the top of me I've got enough chips to survive. I pluck two pink $10,000 chips from the top of one stack and toss them forward. Take that!



Now it's T.J. who's staring me down, an altogether more visceral experience than my brief duel with Kathy. While there's nothing overt about it, the man comfortably embodies a lethal threat, even from the seated position. If it happens to suit him, he can reach across the table and rupture key vertebrae with his bare hands and leave

him! Showing me
♣Q♠, he seems both proud of his laydown and
I've been learning from. It's impossible not
"How
minutes to the
and suddenly he's
messing with T.J. and Kathy?!" With T.J. perhaps. I certainly didn't think of myself as messing
I chose to lay down my strong hands just be-
they were who they were and I didn't have
solute nuts. So even after I get pocket kings
♣K♥ when the board
him a straight, everything's still copacetic.
A few hands later an unfortunate gentleman at an-
And this
time I do wake up Jennifer.

E
I have crawled
pool on the roof. The strong
card stud event,
poker
Last night
and have kids. I
place, just
human Bar-



chips to win if you catch a
with Boutman and Lieb
wielding big stacks, you risk being set all-in ea
pot. Tom Jacobs's $229,0
Table 47, which is
Duke, Hilal
Table 54, the second most ch
laden group and perhaps the most talented. Du
both hot, and Sexton is fresh
at the European No-Limit Cham
Table 55 sits its putative l
ly, yours truly. I've fantasized for decades abo
having a World Series stack big enough to ma
brutal sport of my opponents, but I have zero
experience in the role. I spent the first
days gasping and thrashing to keep my nose abo
water, and it isn't so obvious how to skim alo
the top with the current. Another problem
that my four most chip-laden opponents sit i
immediately to my left. Larry Beilfuss in seat seve
with $121,500, is a bespectacled, all-business
around my age. Then comes Doc Kim in eig
with $127,500, Meng La in nine with $197,0
and Anastassios Lazarou in one with $125,0
Since chips tend to flow clockwise around
table, I'm in lousy position to kick any serious b
On my right, I have a curly-haired Parisian by t
name of Angelo Besnainou, who has what sou
like Cuban salsa leaking from his earphones. H
about the sunniest person I've met in Las Veg
so far. Even summer is the hot that he has o
$84,000, which I plan to relieve him of stat
At Level 11 the antes alone are $1,000 (t
times the buy-in for my home game) with blu
of $2,000 and $4,000. My stacks now consist of s
teen blue-and-white dimes, twenty-four oran
five-thousands, and fourteen hot-pink ten-tho
sands. We've been told to keep our pinks at the f
that opponents can gauge whom they do or
don't want to tangle with.
As expected, the first player eliminated, ov
at Table 62, is Eric Schulz, who sat at with a s
gle $500 chip. An old poker adage says that all y
need to win is a chip and a chair, but starting fr
so far behind at a table with Mel Judah, T.
Chandler and Jesus Ferguson, that's what it
named it to Mr. Schulz—an old adage. Yet th
yellow-and-black chip of his just earned h
$18,000, the same prize the next eight elimin
will receive. Meanwhile, at our table, A
pleman has just raised all-in. Angelo folds, and I
not playing trooper with Broderick Crawfo
After mucking, I have to brush away what loo
powdered rock salt from the ba
between my stack and Angelo's. Beilfuss ca
Appleman, but Kim, La, and Lazarou all fo
(Was someone snorting lines or noshing saltin
Table 47?) I am down to five
Appleman. A♦
The flop comes A♥ A♠ 5♥, rum
Beilfuss's day while doubling Appleman throu

-150,000. It seems like he was down to felt on ; few minutes ago.

he white mess turns out to be sugar, and the nut turns out to be Angelo. I discover this by ching him sprinkle out more of it. I stare at r, shaking my head. "For sweet life," he tells "You know?" He goes on to explain that nisian Jews, of which he is one, have a tradi- of adding sweetness to life by sprinkling sug- n portentous objects, a new house, a tractor, ild . . . I have to admit it's a wonderful con- t, but as its substance combines with the moss- on our fingers we're sugarcoating the cards as play them. Isn't it bad enough that I've got er the suddenly ill-tempered Beilfuss or the r inscrutable Kim snapping me off with reraise each time I try stealing blinds? Have they no m respect for the Bully? A few hands later ng Lu comes over the top of me, all-in, this af- I've made the heaviest wager of my life by ng his big blind eight pink—eight pink 0,000 chips. I'm forced to lay down the same jacks that came to my rescue on Monday.

After licking my fingers and wounds for a nd, I'm only too happy to call, with K♣K♦, last $28,000 of Ron Stanley, the player in t 2. Stanley turns over K♥10♠. Oh yeah, I gat, mentally pumping my fist. Time to get k in the lead! But the Q♥9♦3♦ flop gives Stanley a belly straight draw, and when, sure ough, the beardless jack of clubs arrives on the n, my stack and my confidence plunge to $",000, a piddling sum at this stage. Just in time, , for Level 12, when the blinds jump to three d six grand. Worst of all, I get high-carded to able with Habib, Sexton, Jeff Shulman (the ip leader, with almost $500,000), Jacobs, and outier. In my humble opinion, it's over. Not t I've given up, but I have to be realistic be- e I get blinded to death. My only chance is to it, not too long, for a monster to materialize be- en my knuckles, hope I get called by a worse nd and don't get sucked out on, and so double ough. And then I have to do it *again*. And then ve to do it again. At least we have a ravish- r dealer named Red, presumably because of her o-colored shoulder-length locks, to go with e hazel eyes and a sly grin.

J.'s $400,000 threatens to make him boss es, a role he was surely born to play. And with Shulman's vast stacks on my right, I'm develop- a severe case of big-stack envy. A half hour air we lose Kathy Liebert. She entered a big with queens but lost to K♥10♦, then got nced five hands later when someone called her 10♣ raise with a pair of queens, and that time queens *did* hold up. Very brutal. But now I can ely keep from whooping when, sitting in the ll blind, I find K♠K♦. Even better is that Anie Duke, who's playing without shoes or socks, has already raised it to go [illegible] eight more and flush her whole hope ly but confident rank. Her response: "I'm all in." I emitted [illegible] ping my kings as Duke stuck down [illegible] This is good. What's bad is that our table suddenly become the matrix of Annie Duke dom, all of them framing a mirror of deception to my innocent cowboys, willing them to be bushwhacked by ladies. Bob Thompson's reminder that Annie's the last woman left only whips them up further. *Yaaeee . . . You go, girl! . . . C'mon, sweetie!* Yet in spite of all this, my brag book decrees that the cowboys stand up.



FERGI

We come back from dinner to antes of $2,000, blinds of $5,000 and $10,000, with the final fourteen reconfigured as such:

Table 1
1 [illegible], $225,000
2 [illegible], $130,000
3 [illegible], $330,000
4 [illegible], $365,000
5 [illegible], $450,000
6 [illegible], $400,000
7 [illegible], $540,000

Table 2
1 [illegible], $540,000
2 [illegible], $330,000
3 [illegible], $270,000
4 [illegible], $400,000
5. JEFF SHULMAN, $440,000
6 [illegible], $105,000
7. MIKE SEXTON, $385,000

What a player Appleman must be, having started the day with $0,000? I'm glad that he's at my table as, once again, we play hand for hand, aiming to get down to six. Between shuffle up and watch, Angelo gets [illegible] when A♣6♠ goes down to Shulman's A♦[illegible]♣.

I remind myself he was right, [illegible] tion changes the value of speculative hands like K♠9♦ [illegible]

n. It's



buckles adorning the brim, his wraparound

vexity must make for

beard, the bona fide

les, or

I dip my jacks into the muck. Too many cards, plus no read whatever on Chris.

Only briefly have to wait three more hand[s] for my first chance at redemption, looking d[own] to the button. It certainly looks like Big Slick. I [look] again to make sure. Yessiree, it's A♦K♣. Sa[y] discreetly as possible, I want my turn [to] before pushing ten orange toward the unraised [pot]. Though I'm not sure that Steve Kaufman mucks, [he] shoves forward a tall stack of pink, snarl[s] "Raise." He may not have actually snarled, [but] that's how it registers in my soul. And what [is] the particle of verity, it's another $100,000 to [call].

In the final chapter of *Super/System*, Brun[son] claims that A-K are his favorite pocket cards [be]cause you win more with them when you r[aise] a hand and lose less when you don't; whereas A-[Q], just one pip below it, is a hand he famously [re]fuses to play under any circumstance. T.J.'s b[ook] stresses that you have to win both with [A-K] against A-K. "It's the biggest decision-hand [in a] tournament." He considers it so decisive that [in] four of his twelve practice hands, the reader is [giv]en A-K. And be still my computerized, b[ook]-learnin' heart and suck in my un-Christ[ian] cheeks, but I just have a feeling that T.J. is r[ais]ing a play. And I want him to go on makin[g] it. Yet with four hundred large in the pot, what [the] hay is a feeling? The short answer runs so[me]thing as follows: T.J. writes that when he [is] raised holding A-K, his response depends on *[what] made the raise*. I've studied the passage so ob[sess]ively, I believe I can quote it verbatim. "Th[ere] are times when I will just flat call the raise. Th[ere] are times when I will try to win the money r[ight] then by reraising. And there are times when I [will] simply throw the hand away. It all depends [on] what I know about my opponent." Not to [be] overly granular here, but I think T.J. thinks he [can] push me around, so I *feel* I should give him a [call]. Playing against him these last two nights [has] made it clear he's a guy on whom nothing [is] lost—just his chips in this case, if I'm right. If [I'm] wrong, I'll be out of the tournament.

"Call."

The flop of my life comes a baby rainb[ow] 2♣ 5♥ 4♠. I still have boss overcards, plus a [re]belly-flow to a wheel; but I also have nada. S[o] draw for T.J., I'm guessing, since I've put him [on] a medium ace. He's not the kind of guy to rer[aise] with A-3—unless he has Kryptonite testes o[r] sumes he can bluff me with garbage, both [of] which are probably operative. I recall tha[t] practice Hand 4, the flop comes three babie[s]. Player A bets, T.J. quizzes the reader, what do [you] do? "You throw your hand away. Why? Bec[ause] it's three nothing. In no-limit hold'em, you [can't] afford [illegible] about the dozenth time he's rest[ated] the never-chase maxim. Assuming he knows [that] I know this, I chase. The instant I tap the

cking, T.J. mutters, "Two hunnerd thousand" his entire stack of pink chips disappears in- is hand, to be deftly redeposited between and the pot in four stacks of five. His fingers 't seem to be trembling.

'all," I croak finally, making a virtue of ne- ty by trying to sound like I've lured poor T.J. my trap, an impression I hope isn't risibly be- as my vibrating digits fumble to count twen- ink. I can't bear even to glance in T.J.'s di- tion, so I cannot say how he reacts to the turn l, the seven of diamonds, which as far as I'm cerned changes exactly nothing. I check.

I'm all-in," T.J. says. No surprise here, since been trying to buy the pot all along. A third rmous bet doesn't scare me any less, or any e, than the first two did. Except now he has me all-in.

I call."

Thompson notes for the gallery that T.J. has me ered by a hundred thousand or so. What he sn't say is that if his fellow Texan has even a of deuces, I'm finished. T.J. turns over an and a nine, muttering something I can't quite e out because of the buzz off the rail. When m over macho Big Slick, there are oohs, aahs, lause, and T.J. appears mildly shocked. Amid gathering uproar, Thompson announces our ds. A trey will give us both wheels, a nine and kevorked. Anything else, the pot's mine. My se, as the dealer's right fist thumps the table, hat T.J. is going to catch . . .

Jack of clubs on the river," drawls Thompson Jr. McManus wins eight hundred and sixty-six usand and becomes the new chip leader." Ben- Behnen and Amarillo Slim have been stand- behind the table for the last several hands, and ony now drawls, "Jesus Chrahst!"

'Ah'd bet on that boy," Slim drawls back. 's got the heart of a cliff divah."

T.J. taught me everything I know about this e," I announce. "Read his book and you'll e." If I had my copy on me, I would brandish it lt for the cameras. T.J. stubs out a Salem, not sed. "It didn't teach you that, boy," he growls, what I hear as a trace of contempt. Now, the man on earth I would taunt is T. J. Cloutier. o remember how showing my queen to Kathy ert didn't seem to assuage her. Not that it's job to assuage either one of them . . .

his *former* cliff diver, though, is gonna sit d tight with his chip lead. After thirteen rs at the table and staring down T.J.'s three els, he's got cobwebby spermatozoa floating ugh his vitreous humor. So he's not even ted to play a 3♦8♥, J♥5♣, or even A♥7♥ sir. He also decides not to raise but to limp. Duke, one off the button, cooperates beau- ly, raising to $60,000. Hasan and Chris fold. an stands up, yawning and stretching, to watch. And then I'm yawning, too, as I wait for Jen to start moving $150,000 toward the pot; judging by the size of Duke's stack, it's crucial I have set her all in. The next thing I know, Hasan Kaufman and the dealer are telling me to re-raise, claiming I went back into my stack for more chips without saying, "Raise." I realize they're right and apologize. The dealer determines that the amount in my hand as it started forward was $60,000, which happens to be the minimum allowable raise of Annie's original bet. And boy, she's not happy. My raise doesn't set her all-in, but since she only has $140,000 left, she's been priced in. She turns to her entourage. "This is the worst thing that's ever happened to me in a tournament!" she shrieks . . . and *shrieks*. I'm afraid, is the word. "Let me call that myself," she chides Kaufman, and for a moment I'm cheering her on, till she adds, "I would've been glad to let him go to his stack for more." She turns around up through brown bangs, jangling her wrist load of beads, braided leather, plastic bracelets. That she would have been "glad" to let me put her all-in suggests she has a premium hand, and that she was so overwrought when she said it makes it impossible to believe she was acting. I have to put her on something better than a lousy pair of jacks, do I not? But so why, after my raise was scaled down to sixty, didn't she simply reraise me?



HASAN HABIB (AT LEFT) AND JIM MCMANUS

The flop comes A♣Q♣5♣, about as bad it can be for my picks, so I check to the shrieker. "All-in," she says, sliding her stacks in. She has a live hum in being inside her—her third. But that's not the reason I fold. No way can I call even a hundred grand more, though the pot odds declare that I should. Not with them overcards squatting pregnantly on the board. It isn't the toughest laydown I've made, but it still smarts to have to muck johnnies again. This is, after all, two-card chicken we're playing, and things can change fast on fourth street and fifth street . . .

"I changed my mind," Duke announces, then graciously shows me an ace before mucking. "That's the best thing that ever happened to me in a tournament." Big applause from the rail. *Hang in there, Annie!* [illegible]



of the flop. So my little snafu while trying to put her all in cost me $120,000 — and handed Jeff Shulman the lead. If I'd simply said, "Raise," I'd be sitting on over a million.

To stem this new ebb tide, I resolve to enter no pots for the next [illegible] unless I find aces or kings. I watch [illegible] without a flop, a single raise being enough to capture the blinds. Meanwhile, at the other table, Sexton and Lederer get bounced in consecutive hands.

Level 15 brings with it $3,000 antes and [illegible] blinds, but my chips are still copious enough to let me relax, await monsters. Anyone in his right mind would fold when I find A♣9♦, I flash back to what Annie just told me and call Chris's raise to $60,000. Hasan calls as well. When the flop comes A♠Q♠5♠ rainbow, Chris says, "All-in."

"I've [illegible] chips," declares Hasan. Chris and I mull it. I say about half that.

[illegible] I'm out of the tournament. If I win I'll not only guarantee playing tomorrow but [illegible] the prize for the $1.5 million [illegible] percent of those I've received says no way do you call in these situations unless [illegible] have top pair, but I [illegible] and I [illegible] me [illegible] less honest. He's certainly capable of bluffing, but he's also extracted [illegible] from his butt in the last twenty minutes. My mouth for some reason says "call," [illegible] A♥9♠. I [illegible] give him decent psycho- [illegible] flush [illegible] call

and show pocket aces. Revealing the fat- A♠9♠. Annie never catches up, so she's out [illegible] she slowly gets up, Thompson announces [illegible] Annie's tenth-place finish is the highest [illegible] woman since Barbara Enright came in fifth [illegible] 1995, and the $52,160 makes Annie the leading female money winner in World Series history. After watching her play for a week, I doubt [illegible] will cheer her up much. She's a cowgirl.

Down to nine men, we are ranged around [illegible] table: Ferguson in seat one with $800,000, [illegible] Habul with $400,000, me with $950,000, Cloutier with $550,000, Abinsay with $420,000, [illegible] Appleman with $240,000, Jeff Shulman with $1,000,000, Captain Tom Franklin with $600,000, and Steve Kaufman with $220,000. Sitting just to my left, T.J.'s in perfect position to hammer his student, like he's been trying to [illegible] for two days. Plus he now has revenge as a motivator.

For the next hour or so, the standard pre-flop raise is ninety or a hundred thousand, just [illegible] enough to take down the blinds. From time to time one of us reraises all-in, but in each case the original raiser gives the reraiser credit by folding. Then, in very short order, this happy [illegible] Abinsay, from under the gun, brings it in for $60,000, and Appleman calls with his [illegible] $58,000. With the J♠10♠, I'm tempted to make it a three way, but I follow the no-chasing dictum. Thank God and Cloutier too, because none of the straight or flush cards appear on the board as Appleman's A♠K♠ easily holds up over Mick's A♦10♣. Two hands later Captain Tom wagers his last $118,000 before the flop, and Ferguson calls him with tens. When the Captain shows fours and the board gives no help, we are set [illegible]

One more unfortunate bet and it's bedtime, but nobody wants to finish in seventh. At every WSOP event, the last nine players receive commemorative final-table jackets; there's a hefty difference in prize money ($146,700 for seventh versus $195,600 for sixth); but the real reason for our lull in aggression is that tomorrow's final table will seat only six, owing to the Discovery Channel's need for compressed action in their documentary. Since we all want to be in the movie, not one all-in bet gets a call for the next forty minutes. The guy forcing most of the action is Jeff, and he steadily builds up his stack. I'd love to know whether he's doing it with legitimate hands, but I'm not catching cards to find out with. One mistake against Jeff and you're gone, whereas he can guess wrong and still play.

Finally, *finally*, one off the button, I find a hand — the first time I've seen them all day. But my stress ratchets down notch by notch as Kaufman, then Chris, then Hasan, muck their hands. At this point I'm tempted to limp, though I know it would be read as a trap. The $66,000 in a [illegible] blinds I'll win by raising is hardly ch[illegible]

nge, but when you find pocket rockets you
to execute people. Masking my chagrin, I
e the minimum raise to $60,000, hoping
one will come blasting back over the top of
show of timidity. Not this time. T.J. even
ots me a rare little smile as he folds, and Ro
and Jeff are also unprompted to call.

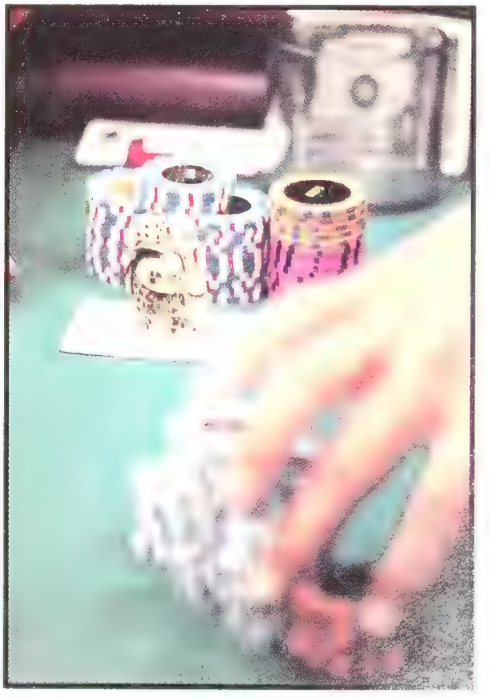
hree hands later, Jeff raises $200,000 from
button. Kaufman ponders defending his
,000 small blind for a moment, then passes,
ing Chris, in the big blind, to reflect on his
ons for another thirty seconds. "What would
s do?" a shrill railbird wonders aloud, getting
hs. The answer is: move all seven of His tidy
ks toward the pot, reraising $650,000. Hasan
the rest of us scram. Jeff stares at Jesus for
be ten seconds, then shrugs almost meekly
calls. When he turns over 7♥ 7♣ — not really
h of a hand to be calling a big stack all-in
—there are whispers and cries of astonish-
t. Then Chris shows us 6♣ 6♠! In ab-
te crunch time, the twenty-three-year-old
mon has somehow made a veteran read of his
ponent, leaving Chris with two outs. As auto-
nce cameras fire away and the railbirds go
ut, the flop comes 10♥ 3♥ [illegible] 6♥! Having
ded a miraculous set, Jesus vaults from his
r. And yet Jeff, for all his hellacious bad luck,
a flush draw—nine outs right there, to go
the two other sevens. Jesus's lean, foxy wife,
ny Burns, has her palms on her ears, a Munch
mer, as voices call out for sixes or sevens or
ts. When 5♣ hits on the turn, Jeff has a
ght draw as well, though Chris is still the
favorite. The dealer turns fifth street: a ten.
heart flush, no seven. As Jeff slumps back in
hair, Chris dances out of his, the sooner to
cked in a tango embrace from Ms. Burns. No
bratory peck for these two, but a lingering
smooch while they twirl one another around.
esus Makes 6-6-6," I proclaim. "Takes Over
Lead, Molests Wife in Public."

Molests Girlfriend in Public," a railbird
nds me.

ven better," I say. But the truth is, I'm dying
de. Not only is Jennifer not here to cheer me
's starting to sink in that to win this damn
I'll not only have to catch a few monsters,
ed to catch them when someone else holds
single pip lower. I'll have to play well for four
just to be in a position to get lucky when the
money goes in the pot. If only, if only, I sniv-
only I'd caught aces on this hand — till it
s on me that if I had, I would've lost every
of my chips. But of one thing I'm certain:
ching Jesus is due for an epic correction.
ng bounced Duke with aces and Franklin
tens, he now spikes a two-outer and dou-
through Jeff to the lead. What he needs is a
k crucifixion, if only to give his strawberry-blond Mary Magdalene something to [illegible] about. Everyone at the table would love to put it to him right now, yet we're terrified of taking him on. Not only does he have the big stack but he's got my old horseshoe lodged miles and miles up his [illegible].

T.J., of course, isn't terrified. He'd seen hundreds of rushes like this before Chris was even born. I fold Raquel Welch (3-8) in a hurry. "Raise," T.J. mutters as soon as the action gets to him, pushing in $290,000. Abinsay folds, but Shulman reraises all-in. Then Jesus not only calls Jeff and T.J.; he, too, reraises all-in! The big guy can't seem to believe what has happened, but he mantfully lays down his hand, claiming it was jacks. We believe him. What are jacks, after all, once Jesus H. Christ gets involved? Turns out to be a pretty shrewd laydown when Jeff shows two kings, and Chris has . . . the aces again! Get the fuck outta here! The board renders no poetic justice either, because this time the best hand holds up. Just like that, Jeff is out. A couple of minutes ago he was running the table. He congratulates Chris and the rest of us, and then, with his dad's arm around him, walks away like a man with a future.

Ten hours later, the Horseshoe's vast tournament room has been converted to an intimate poker studio, if there is such a thing. In place of last night's four tables there are twenty rows of seats facing a thirteen-foot monitor. Bleachers were erected along one side of the final table, flanked by more rows of seats at both ends. The table is lit with four banks of lights, surrounded by cameras and monitors. Everyone else wants to interview the finalists, but the Discovery director has first dibs because of the shoot. One of his tech guys wires me for sound, winding the line up through the fly of my pants and clipping the mike to my collar.



Back behind the bleachers, I peruse the new sheet with Hasan. Chris is in seat one with $2.853 million, Hasan is in two with $464,000, I'm in three with $554,000, T.J.'s in four with $216,000, Roman's in five with $521,000, Kaufman is in six with $511,000. Between us we have $5.19



California, has already placed second in
hear hold'em event, so he's lost K
mere fifty-four, is a rabbi as well as a professo
languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and other Sem
ic languages) at Hebrew Union College
Cincinnati, sufficiently high-powered as a sc
as to be a consultant on the Dead Sea Scrolls.
ter playing big tournaments since 1997, he m
the final table at Tunica. He's also a bit
noodge.

I may have the second most chips, but we'r
basically tied for second behind Ferguson
with a stack less than half the size of mine,
is at least twice as dangerous. He sits bolt
right and smokes, his gray Binion's polo s
tucked into beltless beige slacks. I let him k
one more time how terrific his book is, bu
doesn't want to hear about it. He seems to th
it's some kind of gamesmanship, and maybe
right. Yet it's obvious to him and everyone
who the novice is here, the book-learned
nament virgin. No question, these five other
see my $554,000 as the most plunderable st

The blinds are still $15,000 and $30,000,
$3,000 antes, and will be for the next eighty
minutes. T.J. can't wait long to make a move
it's Hasan who puts in the first raise, to $70,
I'm tempted to call with 2♦ 2♥ but come to
senses—duh!—in time to pass. When T.J.
Roman pass, too, it looks like Hasan may have
couted the last day's first steal. But then
comes Professor Kaufman blasting over the to
him in a language we all understand: twenty p
Once Jesus folds, Hasan has the day's first gulp-
thy decision. After gazing at Kaufman for ma
ten seconds, he lays down his hand with a si

Hand 2: From the button, Roman make
$100,000 to go, a likely positional raise. C
says, politely but firmly, "All-in." Roman c
pushing his entire half million, then turns
A♣ Q♠. Chris shows 8♦ 8♥. I want to obs
Roman's face, but T.J. is blocking him ou
Thompson narrates the 7♥ 2♦ 7♣ flop, follo
by a jack and a trey. Roman stands up from
table to abundant applause. His ouster has
guaranteed me fifth-place money, though it's
last thing I care about now. What I want is to
Jesus and the rest of these money-changers
the temple and take in the sorority shekels. W
I don't want is to glance at a monitor an
forced to wonder who's the little homunc
hunched in the seat next to T.J.—this as
Hand 4, T.J. is moving all-in. No one calls
certainly not the homunculus with his me
K♣ 5♣. T.J. shows us A♠ 10♠. And now, on H
5, here comes Hasan moving in. I can't call
7♠ 6♥, and neither can anyone else. Am I p
ing too passively? I've already bled away 10
stack while the others are letting

On my next hand Chris raises $50,000, Hasan
s, and with 8♣ 6♣ so do I, so do T.J. and Ro
and Steve. We've thus let Chris extend his
by $63,000. His chips are arranged in two mas-
triangles, one on top of the other—ten pink
nty chip columns in a 1-2-3-4 configuration,
ed by six of less regular color scheme arranged
3. Very scary.

My next few hands are unplayable, but on
d 9 I find A♣ Q♣. Hasan, in the small blind,
raised it all in once again. Suited A-Q is a bet-
hand to raise than to call with, but still. Five-
ded, it can fairly be called, pace Brunson, a
ister. Granted that Roman's A♣ Q♠ just got
beheaded, but my read of Hasan is that he's
ght up in a spasm of all-in steal-raises. In the
I am happy to call him. Pushing my seven
ks forward, I believe that this puts me all-in.
an shows A♥ 4♥. I was right. When I flip up
A♣ Q♣, everyone sees why I'm thrilled.
at a call!

But now comes the flop of Hasan's and my
9♠ 5♠ K♠. So far, so fantastic. Dead to the
e remaining fours, Hasan groans, shakes his
d. The other forty-two cards in the deck give
a $900,000 pot and a real shot at taking down
is. The crowd's yelling hundreds of things, but
can hear is the Habib Society pleading for
's. "Ha-san Ha-beeeeeeeb!" someone croons.
outnumber my own fans, such as they are,
they have a specific card to pray for, but I've
e to understand that I'm gonna win not just
hand but the tournament. One and a half mil-
dollars. The heavyweight championship of
er. My faith is confirmed when fourth street
ves as the sacred, the numinous, the preter-
urally chic five o' diamonds. *Close* to a four, I
ht to myself, but no sucking-out-on-me cigar.
an has stood up, getting ready to shake hands.
heart pounds spasmodically, but I'm still feel-
thoroughly confident. So that when the fifth
t card—*what*'—is—*what*'—4♥, I "reel," ac-
ding to Glazer's column that night, "in stunned
ence," even though a chorus of f-words and
phemies and fours is howling like a squadron
Pakistani banshees on tilt through my skull.
zer will also write that "Jim hadn't suffered too
ny indignities at the hands of fate in the last
ple of days. Most of his leading hands had
d up. But now, at the worst possible moment,
d taken a punishing blow." Punished and reel-
n then, away from the table, I have to be told
Hasan that I had him covered. "You'rrre still
nherrre, buddy. I'm sorrrry. Keep playing. I'm
orry..." Although it feels like I died, I have life,
ly $105,000 worth. Hasan and I are still
ping hands, shaking our heads in amazement.
realize that this is what happens in poker
etimes, that it could have just as—*more*—
ily gone the other way, the towers of pink and
orange chips being raked [illegible]
stead of a foot to the right.

Around or so later I find A♠ 2♠. I have [illegible]
ly enough chips for the blinds, so I probably won't
see another ace, let alone a big pair. I move in.
Kaufman—who else?—
not only calls but
moves in himself, try-
ing to knock me out on
the cheap while mak-
ing sure it stays heads-
up between us. Once
Chris and Hasan muck
their hands, Kaufman
turns over . . . A♦ Q♠.
It's perfect. That I'm
now in the same spot
Hasan was just in some-
how inspires an ever
more bottomless gloom.
Yeah, sure, when Dante
was spiraling down in-
to the frozen bowels of
Hell he may have also
been ascending, with-
out realizing it, toward
Paradise, but here in
Las Vegas, another
frigid desert peopled by
faithless demons, three-outers don't spike twice in
a row. Forget about the long odds against it—I
know it's not going to happen. And indeed the
nine-six-king flop gives me neither a straight draw
nor a flush draw, let alone a sweet deuce. In the
end, with an ace on the turn, a ten on the river,
it's not even close. I am out.



"JESUS" ON THE LAST HAND

Now that the Satanic Prince of Noodges has
forked me down into the pitch, there's applause.
Many zooms. Many clicks. I shake Kaufman's
hand, then Hasan's, then T.J.'s. "You played
well," T.J. says. And that's something. And now
here is Jesus coming around for a hug. "You played
great!" he says, homily squeezing me. Walking
away from the table, however, it dawns on me
how alive I felt while playing four days in the
Big One, and now I feel dead. I mean, *look*. As
Thompson and Glazer and Hellmuth and all the
other commentators are making clear to the as-
sembled and far-flung poker universe, I've won
$247,760 by finishing fifth out of 512. What it
feels like is fifth out of six.

Up on the podium, Becky Behnen shakes my
hand, pets my arm. "You were wonderful, Jim.
And last night! Congratulations!" Shaking my
hand in his turn, her son Benny snaps me back
to reality. "That four was brutal, man. *Brutal*.
You were playing so awesome last night!" Yeah,
last night . . . Tom Elias ushers me a few steps to
the left, where the payout booth stands. From
his unbashful spiel, I gather that "big winners"



B

ll the film and

ng four of clubs on the river, and both of
ir cheek. While they stare at each other, Chris
ll es what must be aching. T.J. mucks. They've
e at it now for four and a half hours—a long
e with this much at stake and dozens of lens
s nd mikes jabbing into your poker space.

n minutes later, on Hand 93, T.J. raises to
5,000. When Chris reraises six hundred thou,
moves in like a shot. The pulse in his cheek
es me think that he feels like he's finally got
s where he wants him. Certainly, if Chris
ages to call him, this will be it—unless we get
her chopped pot. Chris scratches his beard,
es his head, exhales. Two minutes pass. I
speak for T.J., but no one else seems to be-
r ge all the time he is taking. "Call him, Jesus!"
uts a rowdy fan twenty rows back. T.J.'s eyes
aw as he drags on his umpteenth Salem. He
r his left fist to his mouth, clears his throat.
n't anyone give him a lozenge?

T.J. likes his hand," Andy whispers to me,
d I think Chris has ace-nine." I remember
matching A-9's Chris and I turned out to
olding last night, how the untranquil
d had been scalpeled by laughter. I watch
as Chris takes off his hat, then his sun-
es—*whoa*—in an instant detanging his au-
The thinning hair above his temples accen-
d by the length of the strands, brown eyes
d bloodshot and sunken, he also looks
h more like Jesus.

e calls. As the low-dB buzz from the previ-
ative or six minutes rises to a crescendo, he
s over A♠ 9♣. T.J. immediately shows him
and . . . Q♣. The crowd gasps and whistles.

Pretty astonishing call," I tell Andy.

Chris's?"

No, yours."

e nods modestly, as though he hasn't been
ing reads like this the whole tournament,
elbows my arm. "Ace-queen look familiar?"

Oh, boy . . ."

e flop—4♥ 2♥ K♣—keeps T.J. in the lead.
n K♥ falls on the turn, Andy groans, "Not
a!" Because now any deuce, four, king, or
will give us another chopped pot. Exuberant
ason boosters entreat the poker deities for a
Cloutier fans are more numerous, but it
clear what they should beg for. Hollering
's go, T.J.!" is pretty much all they can do.

us leaps from his seat with his fists in the air
T.J. thrusts his big paw across the table before
the last card. What else could it be but "...
!" Bob Thompson ejaculates. No one, es-
ially Bob, seems able to believe it. Chris reach-
ss the table and clasps T.J.'s hand. "You out-
ed me," he says. T.J. shakes his head,
greeing. That he just got harpooned through
entricles doesn't register on his vast, craggy
ares. He's smiling!

Cathy Burns and the Ferguson sis
Chris now. Hugs, kisses, power hu
ing. Chris still makes his way around the t
to where T.J. is standing with his wife, Je
side a crush of reporters. While Chris is almost
as tall, when the two men embrace their differ-
ence in mass is straight out of vaudeville: the
burly tight end hugs the sinewy swing dancer,
steel-wool ringlets meshing with yard-long chest-
nut locks. "Are we still friends?" Chris asks.

"Of course. Don't feel bad. You played great.
But once they let go of each other, T.J. asks, "You
didn't think it would be that tough to beat me,
did you?"

"Yes, I did."

I congratulate Chris, then try to tell T.J. how
brilliantly he played. "There's a lotta luck in
poker," he rumbles, "and if you're gonna
play this game you bet-
ter get used
to that."



"JESUS" IS THE WINNER

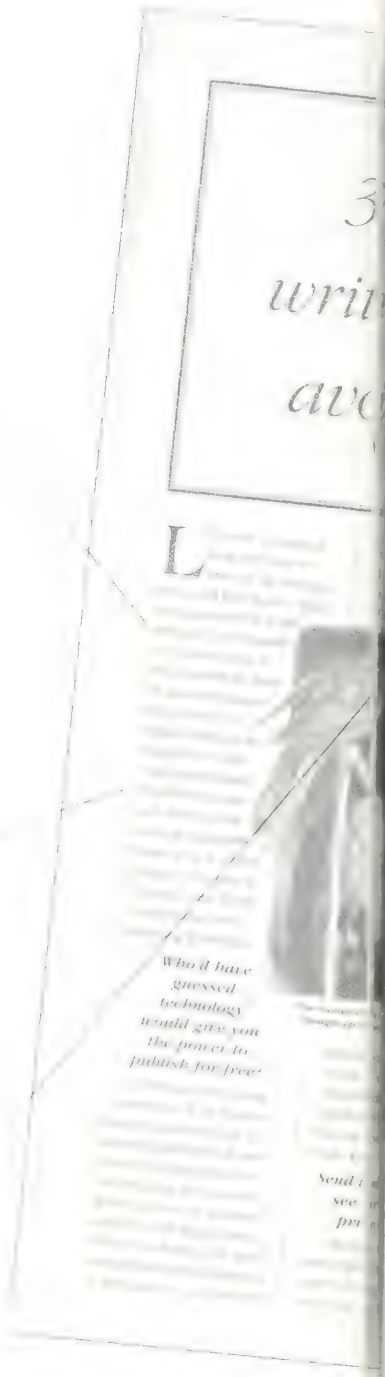
Needing oxygen and sunlight, I go for a walk down on Fremont, then head south along First Street. Strip joints and flophouses, pawnshops and T-shirt emporia, a few dozen down-market tourists. In Las Vegas, Fifth Street is Las Vegas Boulevard South, which also is known as the Strip. Family Vegas. We are far, far away from that world. Already the scorching southwest wind has driven some grit through my lips and made my pale forehead feel crisp. I think of my children, my wife. By this time tomorrow, I'll see them.

At the far eastern tip of the Pacific time zone, Las Vegas sunsets come early. Even at five thirty or so on a May afternoon, even through polarized lenses, there are horizontal shafts making you squint and ricocheting dazzlements that make you shade your eyes, and then there are glares that make you *duck*. And then there are thermal traps where it must reach 150 degrees. And when these are interrupted by gelid blasts from gaping casino doorways, it's a little like wandering along the perimeter of the eighth and ninth circles of Hell—all of this, mind you, while heading north toward Paradise.

But the thing is, I may be cool. I've seen the damn thing. ■

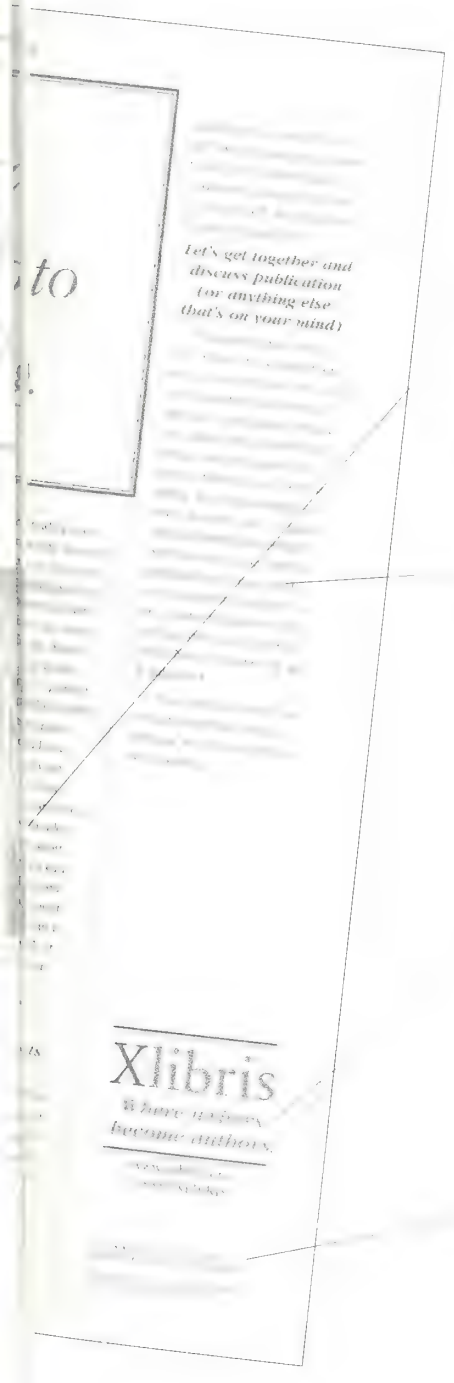
ALL

Xlibris saves publishing by des



NITY

Tom Bissell and Webster Younce



The Bellybutton Fiasco is receiving "Advanced Service," which costs $300 and results in a workmanlike trade paperback, occasionally adorned with a photograph of the author. "Core" service is free, results in an iffier-looking product, and no author photos are allowed. The top services offered, "Professional" and "Premium," lighten the wallet to the tune of $600 and $1,200, respectively—though Feldcamp has claimed "we really hope no one buys" the most expensive version. Why not? "It's basically for the most obsessive and paranoid authors." What these obsessives will soon realize is that having a book printed, no matter how snazzily, is not the same thing as having it published, and that, without an editor, marketing, or publicity, their book will enter the world with a silence that makes a tree falling in the woods sound like Chinese New Year in comparison.

In four years, Feldcamp augurs, Xlibris will be publishing 100,000 titles a year. That equals the 1999 output of all American publishers combined. "We do not pretend to be judges of what is good," Feldcamp has said. "I'm just proposing that the current filter is the wrong one." We propose that Feldcamp's filter is roughly 8 million times worse, and that the publication of 100,000 mostly dubious books year after year will, in time, affect American publishing in every worst way and obliterate whatever remains of a genuine book culture.

Walt Whitman self-published, as has the poet A. R. Ammons. James Joyce's arrangement with Sylvia Beach was itself vanity-press-ish. Self-publication is not evil, and those who make use of it deserve good luck and godspeed. However, by self-publishing with Xlibris, one no more transmogrifies from a "writer" into an "author" than *The Bellybutton Fiasco*'s presence between paperback covers spins its dross into gold.

What is this? The venerable firm Random House has a "significant minority investment" in Xlibris? Indeed it does. One Xlibris title, *The Marriage Plan: How to Marry Your Soul Mate in One Year*, will soon be published by the Random House imprint Broadway, though Feldcamp claims that the arrangement provides no financial reward for Xlibris. For all its attempt of traditional publishing, Feldcamp says that "[illegible] time we can move a book from our world to Simon & Schuster or Random House [illegible] we feel very good." Vanity, of course, is all about feeling good. Before snuggling into bed cozily with Xlibris, Random House's admiralty might consult *Ecclesiastes*, which along with its famous estimation that "all is vanity" offers even more pertinent advice: "My child, be warned: Of making many books there is no end."

THE HARPER'S INDEX BOOK

— VOLUME 3 —

Average number of dimples on a golf ball: 415
Chance that an American would rather be mugged than audited: 1 in 2
Gallons of chewing gum scraped up each year by the Statue of Liberty's maintenance crew:

"The single greatest repository of facts to be found anywhere on the planet"
- Brian Williams, MSNBC

"An editorial masterstroke...It [is] that rare thing, an original idea, with immediate appeal and tireless potential."
- *The Washington Post*

"Off-beat and fascinating facts every month...and we love it!"
- Good Morning America

The Harper's Index Book is funny (Miles of doodles produced by the average sixth grader during the school year: 1.3) . . . illuminating (Ratio of the number of Frank Sinatra's gold records to those of Kiss: 1:1) . . . sobering (Chance that a child born in New York City in 1998 is living in poverty: 1 in 2) . . . stunning (Rank of Aries among the astrological signs of people most likely to be in an automobile accident: 1) . . . and, often, simply curious (Ratio of April showers to plants that produced May flowers at the Springfield, Illinois, Park District in 1999: 1:1,571).

Edited by Lewis H. Lapham and senior editor Charis Conn, with an introduction by George Plimpton, this edition of *The Harper's Index Book* is historic, too: it's published in the sesquicentennial of *Harper's Magazine*, the oldest continuously published American magazine.

- HOLIDAY SPECIAL! -
Receive the *Harper's* Anthology and *The Harper's Index Book* for only $39.95
See page 87 for details.

HARPER'S INDEX BOOK

MIRACULOUS FISHING

Lost in the swamps of Colombia's drug war

By Patrick Symmes

Bomb dogs would stop around my hotel in the capital every few nights. Usually it was a pair of handsome German shepherds, eager warriors who padded through the lobby, yearning of biscuits and sniffing for cordite. The hotel was located in Bogotá's red-tiled neighborhood of La Candelaria, where the Street of Sighs passed that of Hope, and because it was just two blocks from Colombia's congress there were always men in the bar who needed protection. I waited out these nocturnal sweeps in a little plaza across the street, buying plastic cups of *aromattica*, a tea made of lemongrass, honey, and lime juice. This keeps you warm in a city set at 8,500 feet, where the wet, penetrating fog is almost perpetual.

On my left was the house where Colombia's first president, Simón Bolívar, survived an assassination attempt thanks to his mistress. She tossed him from a second-floor window, followed by his sword, and then his pants, all she stalled the conspirators for a few precious seconds. Meanwhile the father of his country sprinted up this very street, retreating into the night with the last tatters of Colombian idealism clutched to his privates.

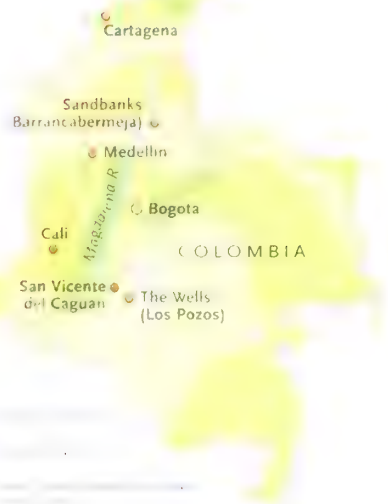
While the dogs sniffed each car in front of the hotel, there was time to discuss the news of the week with the *aromattica* vendor: a nun had killed another nun a few blocks from here, then chopped the body into pieces and burned them.



Americans usually don't wander the streets of Bogotá at night. When a lame-duck President Clinton came to Colombia last August, he avoided the capital entirely for the safer precincts of Cartagena, on the Caribbean coast. Clinton was shepherded through his eight-hour visit by 3,500 Colombian troops and 350 U.S. agents, with four frigates and eighteen patrol boats standing by. He pronounced his support for Colombian democracy in the form of a billion-dollar "anti-drug" aid package that came with as many as 500 military trainers and sixty helicopters attached. Reflecting the relative strength of aerospace lobbyists and their captive congressional delegations, that $400 million fleet is divided between Texas-made Huey troop transports (a la Vietnam, and Connecticut-made Black Hawk gunships, à la the Gulf War. This aid, Clinton vowed, would accomplish what every previous initiative in the drug war has failed to do: reduce the supply of drugs in America while increasing their price.

This venerable logic was torpedoed only a week later, when police discovered that Colombian drug smugglers were building a sophisticated double-hulled submarine that could ship 200 tons of cocaine right under the keels of American policy. The Colombian guerrillas who benefit from the drug trade are also, ahem, responding to America's thoughtless intervention in a messy civil war that kills some 3,500 people a year. They have been fighting for decades in different names, in little [illegible] countryside. Today [illegible] which has about 5,000 [illegible] often called "Colombia's [illegible] medicine. But the [illegible] larger guerrilla army called FARC,

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Cartagena
Sandbanks
Barrancabermeja
Medellin
Magdalena R.
Bogota
Cali
COLOMBIA
San Vicente
del Caguan
The Wells
(Los Pozos)

and women in green uniforms, rocket launchers swiveling back forth, the heavy M60 machine s never slowing down the boogie, bullets and grenades jiggling and ing in time with Juan's lips synch t his own songs.

e peace talks are supposed to take at something called the Peace e, which is located near a village The Wells (Los Pozos), deep in tern FARC landia. The discussions start for several days, but the lead- *mandantes* are already out there, ecide to take things into my own s. I find the same cabbie—a shitty n who looks like he would cheat old the truth—and we depart at ight. I'm confident the journey is if only because so many have been n this road before. Following the ple of Colombian business leaders, Richard Grasso, CEO of the New Stock Exchange, and James Kim, founder of AOL, have journeyed FARC landia to meet guerrilla lead- d open their eyes to the miracles italism. On the other hand, both men had invitations. The road pes right outside town, and we ce along a track of mud and grav- a gray fog that seems to have fol- me from Bogotá.

ees loom out of the distance, but many. The jungle here has been cut for cattle. I'm looking over olds when I feel the cabbie tense d move his foot back and forth en the gas and the break without ning either. We are coasting.

the other side of the road, just e through the dense mist, are fifty FARC guerrillas, standing o loose platoons. Their uniforms solid green and nearly matched black webbing looks brand-new. Galil rifles—Israeli guns, used by les in this war—are clean. The illas have plenty of grenades and o. They are all wearing machetes orately tooled sheaths. Colom don't fight without machetes.

"That's the Monkey," the cabdriver said finally makes up his mind to rate. I look back and catch a of a portly officer, facing the , gesturing with his right hand addresses them. The Monkey "El Mono Jojoy," born Jorge ño) is FARC's top military strate-

gist, a tortoise to Tirofijo's hare. Last year he was paired with his brother-in-law-until-held commander in the execution of three American who were eight-wheeling near Machetes. "I have a mango-head," he complained later, "and it turns into a mango-head-ache.")

We bounce deeper into the jungle.

There is no peace table. There is only a three-, open-sided shed that is empty. This peace shed is well and freshly built, with lights, a cement floor, rooms off the back filled with chairs, and an air-conditioned communications center. Also three satellite dishes. And bags of ice-cold water. But not a table. The shed is quiet when I wander up from The Wells at breakfast. A few guerrillas walk out of the surrounding trees, ignoring me. A guerrilla with a clipboard finally adds my name to some list, but I am condemned to wait all morning for an interview. I kill time by strolling up and down the only road, watching the occasional cowboy with a machete canter past. The guerrilla guarding the front gate of the peace shed watches me every up and down for a full hour.

"Can you speak?" he says at last. *Sí*, I tell him. He eyes the tape recorder and he leans on the post while I lean on mine. It is cloudy, humid, and still. He looks at my notebook. "You can read?" he asks. I nod yes. "Did you go to school?" Yes. "Did you pay hundreds of pesos to learn Spanish?" Two hundred pesos would be about ten cents. Yes, I nod.

He entertains both of us with stories about jaguar hunting, and then he "does" the accents of the different Colombian provinces. "In Santander they say _____," he informs me, "and the *paisas* say _____, and in Putumayo, whoo, they talk funny, they say _____." I can't even hear the difference. But I could listen to him enjoying it so much. He's past child. His name is Sebastian. He is illiterate, was raised in a hot, remote province, and has never traveled anywhere except on patrol. He has been in the jungle "a few years."

Like the American brass, the Bogotá government claims that the guerrillas are succeeding because they

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]



assassinate me. They did I'm forty-nine have sixteen guerrilla."

Simón's with paydirt this Caliban and his relationship with Fidel is notoriously frosty. Trimidad also seems to disregard the hemisphere's leading socialist utopia. The Cuban guerrillas were victorious after only

table, so I don't challenge his defeat-

gets its rifles.

all parts. Arms dealing is

re as miracu-

ndnapping,

simply

protect peasant farmers, [illegible] they are peasant farmers and [illegible] large businesses, cattle[illegible] sell. "It is a financial strategy," a banker-guerrilla explains. "[illegible] are financing the war. Where [illegible] arms come from? The food? We [illegible] the [illegible] and bills, the [illegible] guerrillas, their education."

The guerrillas are "by principle[illegible] munists" but also "patriots" and "[illegible] tionalists" who "want peace" [illegible] "new economic model." He talks [illegible] a "new economy" and a "new [illegible] regime that opens space for other [illegible] a "new state" and a "new structure [illegible] the armed forces" and a "new system [illegible] justice" and a "new model of social [illegible] ciety." Colombia also needs a new [illegible] and communications infrastructure, a new crop-substitution program, and [illegible] anti-corruption culture and [illegible] tribution of land, water, mineral and other rights, not just in some [illegible] but in every part of the country.

This speech is totally interrupted when the guerrilla spokesmodel in her [illegible] T-shirt. She comes in holding [illegible] Simón Trinidad has written. She can't understand it. He looks at the [illegible]

"*Tenía[illegible]* [illegible] says.

"*Email?*"

"Hotmail," he says, pronouncing [illegible] properly in English, with the [illegible] "H." "Hotmail dot com." She still [illegible] him. "Hotmail.dot.com" he says [illegible] Finally he has to go outside for a minute and explain the email address to someone [illegible], then he comes back in and apologizes. Good luck hard to find.

I ask him what impact U.S. military and financial aid will have on Colombia's 40 million people. "If your neighbor's house is on fire," he replies once, "you shouldn't throw gasoline on it. This will increase the horror of the war. A modern war—like in Yugoslavia, with helicopters and airplanes [illegible] bridges and buildings, factories and so on, but not guerrillas. We will spread out [illegible] parts of the country. We will make war of mobile guerrillas, as Che Guevara taught. Today, here; tomorrow, there. It will generalize the war. You are going to bring the war to all Colombia. However, misery will continue.'

watches me for a while and then
"Write that down. The struggle
ontinue. Hunger and misery will
nue."
still have some trouble catching up
the list of all the new things
mbia needs, and he watches my
ook like a hawk.
Write that down!" he says again.
"Misery continues.
Write that down!"

While I am interviewing Simon
dad, a peace delegation of Pen-
tal Christians is in another room,
ng scripture at the glad-handing
rilla spokesman Raúl Reyes. (Reyes
torious for declaring, between
as the FARC man in Costa Ri-
lexico, and Sweden, that he was
of living "in the mountains.")
Yet receptions finish before I do, and
my cabdriver. I sprint after the
p—the only one for twenty miles—
flees over a ridge, sagging with
s, and I am left to walk. I stroll in-
e hamlet of The Wells, with its
ty-three tin-roofed shacks. There
part of the untested continuous along
main street. Shortly after a man
me it never rains during the day,
ains to pour. I spend two hours
g in one of the cantinas, drinking
, watching the rain, and waiting
ay kind of transport. There are
xis, one bus comes by, so packed
men are literally hanging from
des, and the driver refuses to take
Once in a while a pickup truck
ns through, never headed the right
The rain stops, mostly.
Five-year-old boy from the village
ows me out there. He's patient and
ping. "I have paint on my shirt,"
ally offers. Yup—bright orange
I notice a bit more in his hair. I
around. The whole village is
. All twenty-three shacks are
orange. The cantina is bright
. The entire street is painted in
ublic reds and oranges. I push a
gerol into a yellow fence post. The
is soft. Only the fronts of the
three shacks have been paint-
s a Potemkin village.
When did they paint everything?"
ne boy.
"Yesterday!" he shouts. "Yay!"
don't know why I am surprised
couple of guerrillas walk in for
lunch and within seconds find themselves on the restaurant's television set. They are watching a news report about FARC's recent incursion to the capital but tilting it away from the fighting toward the peace talks and the guerrillas' more convenient dishes. "There you are again," one guerrilla says to the other, grinning. Then the same report shows a long interview with Comandante Simon Trinidad, talking about the need for new things. Mysteriously, the mustache works.

Eventually I talk my way onto the truck heading toward the front with the airport. There are already a driver and three assistants in the cab, all older men with filthy, ripped clothes and hands like slabs of burned beef. I stand in the bed of the open truck with nine gray oxen through guerrilla country at ten miles an hour. After ninety minutes we pass a large house with twenty or thirty [illegible] around. Some are [illegible] others are standing on the [illegible] others are sleeping on the [illegible] bag, covered [illegible].

"Look at those [illegible]," the driver says. "They are sleeping it off."

"Look at those trucks," the man on my right says. He whistles under his breath. "They have every thing."

FARC has exacted some order into the region, but the local schools still have empty desks, and people in the towns I talk to about the guerrillas openly. Posters celebrating FARC are up in some homes I saw. And more people than I can count ribbon their mouths with [illegible] becoming peace movements. [illegible] its simple, nondenominational slogan: NO MAS.

The guerrillas are [illegible] with money, FARC doesn't depend on the peasants and doesn't need the towns. It isn't really a guerrilla army, and it isn't building models of any-



[illegible] mean a delay of an hour or two. Impa- [illegible] miles and jump down. The men wish [illegible] for the [illegible] journey.

Five hundred yards [illegible] road when I notice something on a barbed-wire fence: a standard-issue [illegible] I stop to [illegible] course of a minute, I notice, scattered [illegible] in the following order: a camouflage pup tent; a rifle; a path; a FARC guerrilla smoking a cigarette; another camouflage tent, set on a sleeping platform [illegible] another guerrilla, another tent, another rifle, another path; a curl of smoke from a cook- [illegible] hidden deeper in the jungle.

[illegible] FARC [illegible] the [illegible] between the town, with its airport, and the FARC leadership near The Wells.

I walk slowly down the exact middle of [illegible] and I



the resting chain, sprint down the
and race out of sight. The whole e
is over in ninety seconds.

The last thing I see is the short
rilla standing in the middle of the
watching us disappear, the
photocopy in my
the title in the other.

The appearance of sunshine i
gota is a rare event, considered ne
the local papers and fiction
works of García Márquez. I r
through a haze to the street
dodging some war refugees in the
little plaza on my way into the

Maybe it is the altitude, or
the damp Andean chill, or n
something else, but immediate
arrival a fever lashes through my
confining me to bed. I shiver f
days and watch the peace negoti
on live television. Peace acti
union organizers, crackpots, stu
and a government delegation
rive at The Wells, and the Ther
take the stage in the peace she
ferent civilians get five minutes e
propose schemes for rebuilding
bia—the construction of a hug
city from scratch in the deep jun
guaranteed employment for eve
or the proper use of parapsych
or nationalizing all the industri
the farmland, and all the wate
minerals, and TV stations—bu
body is listening to anybody els
a dialogue of the deaf, a spectacle
out substance. Simon Trinid
gravely on the platform in the
nodding like a branch manager,
ing people, asking them to kee
five minutes. At one point, th
Sureshot staggers in, dressed fo
and looking like he couldn't ser
born with a bazooka. He listens
minutes, and then staggers ba
to shouts of "VIVA!"

On the second day in the
room, still sweating, I catch a
news item about some mother
have taken over a local cl
Colombia has the worst kidna
rate in the world, and the moth
demanding the release of their
jot down the name of the chur
two aspirin, and ride a taxi into
poor neighborhood on the outsk
the city. Beggars chase me in
sanctuary, where I find about s

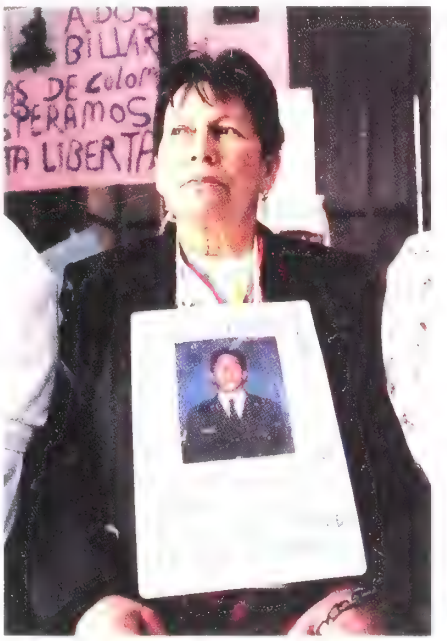
mothers. They're very poor women from small towns and farmlands around Colombia. Each wears a shirt or placard with a photo of her son, his name, and when and where he was taken hostage. It doesn't matter why he was taken hostage, or by whom. Most of the boys were Colombian army soldiers captured by FARC in battle, but there are also mothers of boys who are being held by the ELN guerrillas, by right-wing death squads, or by criminal syndicates, which kidnap people and then sell the captives to whatever group that needs ransom money. Some mothers have bedrolls, plastic jugs of water, and cheap aluminum pots with rice. They've decorated the pots with signs addressed to MR. PRESIDENT, or TO THE MEN OF THE MOUNTAINS, or DEAR SURESHOT, always pleading for the release of their sons and an end to the endless war.

I am in the church for hours, sitting on the floor, talking with the women, photographing their brown, weathered faces, the full panorama of Latin American despair hidden in every set of eyes. They hunch over transistor radios, listening to the negotiations in the peace process, wondering if Simon Trinidad or Ivan Rios will say the word "amnesty." Each of these women has a hope: that maybe my son will come home soon, that maybe he will escape this nightmare. I start thinking about the roadblock where I'm in there, and eventually I have to leave, because I start sobbing. Maybe it is the faces of these women. Or maybe it is the fever, breaking.

The next day I notice an item buried on page six of a Bogotá paper: NORTHEAST REMAINS CUT OFF. Guerrillas from Colombia's other major group, the ELN, have isolated three towns in the northeast flatlands by "flying" the nearest bridges. (Yes, that is the Colombian expression for blowing them up.) The most threatened of the three is an oil center on the Magdalena River called Sandbanks (Barrancabermeja). ELN troops have blocked the roads into Sandbanks and have closed the river to traffic by firing on relief boats. The city is already packed with war refugees—the population has doubled to 300,000 in the past few years—and with prices rising, residents are starting to hoard food.

"The only manner of entering or leaving the Sandbanks area is by air travel," the paper says. In the morning I buy a ticket and fly in.

"You've come to sun yourself," the taxi driver from the airport asks. Sandbanks is famous for its relentless sunshine, but as we go through the town the hazy overcast is complete. At the weedy central plaza I jump out to investigate a large solar clock. As I suspected, it is no time at all here.



Sandbanks doesn't look like a city under siege. There are crowds of people, shoeshine boys are blazing away; the stores are open. I'm left at a dismal hotel overlooking the Magdalena and the seedy waterfront. The river is Colombia's Mississippi, once a commercial and poetic artery in national life, now a deadly morass of twisting channels, sandbars, eroding banks, and wrecks. Garcia Marquez called the river "a swamp with no beginning or end," only "an illusion of memory."

A more prosaic fluid—oil—now rules the region. Sandbanks is dominated by a vast refinery, and greasy smoke billows from three huge venting towers topped by balls of flame. These flares burn all day against the gray sky, like false suns. At night their glow is visible even in the surrounding guerrilla encampments.

In the morning I receive a briefing from Colonel Jaime Martinez, the national police commander responsible for defending Sandbanks itself. "Only half the city is ours," he begins, spreading out a map in his second-floor office and sending for coffee that never appears. Although the national police are actually part of the Defense Ministry, [illegible] more than [illegible] of the 800 million [illegible] Colombia [illegible] thousand men [illegible] most of Sandbanks' [illegible] hoods. The rest [illegible] by some 400 ELN [illegible] outside the city, 2,000 Colombian soldiers—part of the army's 135,000-man force—are [illegible] ELN *frentes*, totaling [illegible] and FARC also has about 1,[illegible] fighters in the region. There is an obscure third group of guerrillas, the Maoist EPL, which has "only" 500 men and which fights in a loose battlefield alliance with the ELN. And there are also about 1,000 right-wing paramilitaries wandering the zone at night, conducting a dirty war of assassinations orchestrated and financed by right-wing landowners and drug traffickers.

FARC guards about 100,000 acres of coca in zones across the river, Martinez says, but the ELN doesn't tax or protect the drug business, preferring kidnapping for profit. The paramilitaries themselves are involved in drugs, though. Everyone attacks the oil infrastructure in the region, blowing up pipelines, stealing gasoline for profit (about 60,000 gallons a day), and kidnapping oil workers for ransom. "Oil attracts the guerrillas, who force [illegible] to finance their war, which [illegible] paramilitaries," Martinez tells me [illegible] any moment here, there [illegible] 3,000 men fighting [illegible] lead." Assassinations [illegible] just had two Sundays [illegible] thing wrong with [illegible] with Sandbanks. The terrain here is a single, swirling battlefield where distinctions [illegible] and policy goals will be impossible. I ask the



M

...ranch of the side branch. We ...
...ssibly through an ever tighter ...
...of horseshoe bends, the river f...
...back on itself. We slow and get ...
...There are more organizing hu...
...bends, muddy banks that look lik...
...bush posts, and an endless w...
...green. It is already hot, and impo...
...to see much in any direction.

I am let off at a bump in the ba...
little path leads up to a clearing ...
...by a high green wall of trees and ...
As instructed, I walk into the cle...
...sit down, and then the *voorsm*...
...swat at insects for half an hour a...
...nally build a tiny grass fire t...
...smoke. This doesn't scare off a ...
...mosquito. There is lots of time to ...
...about bad movies set in the jungl...
...then about García Márquez, ling...
...in his cancer ward, composing l...
...all the things that Fidel Castr...
...solutely never told him. In *The ...
...al in His Labyrinth* Márquez w...
...against loitering like this on the ...
...of the Magdalena: "There were ...
...rooming that desolate place," he ...
..."who were as big as ceiba trees ar...
...the crests and claws of roosters."

Fifteen more minutes and I h...
...rustle, and then look over to see ...
...head. It turns into a head, and t...
...camouflage uniform, and ther...
...more uniforms. The six men ste...
...of the brush. They aren't as tall ...
...ba trees, and their claws are Gali...
...AK-47s. They come right over t...
...pretending to be relaxed. The ...
...thing they do is shake my hand, ...
...one, and then stamp out the gra...

The guerrillas are in camou...
...with worn webbing that holds r...
...rifle grenades, and spare clips. ...
...of them have shoulder boards in ...
...red and black, which is a re...
...wouldn't want to run into the w...
...set of guerrillas out here. They ...
...wearing battered leather combat ...
...and have small green towels d...
...over one shoulder, which they ...
...swat at bugs. They leave one m...
...watch me, and go back into the j...
...again. For the next two hours the ...
...pupils are on me like NATO-...
...grade, and the guerrillas have c...
...picked their dumbest soldier to ...
...me fully aware that I will not g...
...single word out of him. Finall...
...other five guerrillas reappear.

One of them, a vaguely ar...

...eight year old, who is tall by lo... standards—seven inches my camera ...le has two radios and a cooler ... and I finally realize he is the ...r. I explain that I am a journalist, ...e may have received a message ...coming, that I want to ask about ...ia politi...

"...s," he interrupts. "We had a very ...woman from the *Washington Post* ...me."

"...*ost*," I blurt out. I can't stop my... "The *Washington Post*."

"...*st*?" he asks.

"...*ost*."

"...s, the *Post*. She never sent me ...rticle she wrote. Why do you sup... that is?"

I puts me down carefully, then tells ...s real name, but later insists that ...et it. I have to refer to him by his ...name, which is Comandante ...o. He is the commander of the ...*frente sur oriental*, one of four in ...Middle Magdalena, and is currently ...strating the siege of Sandbanks. ...We get in another *yonsin*, sitting on ...gunwales and packed tightly to...ther, knees interlocked for stability in ...ippy canoe. I look down, avoiding ...eyes, and study the interspersed ...rn of legs—camo, denim, camo, ...n, camo. The canoe motors up ...through smaller bends, and we ...l up a second *yonsin* with two more ...illas. All the men are silent. I'm ...ing about the extremely small ...ssibility (the *im*possibility, really, if ...consider odds and chances and ge...raphy) that a new Black Hawk gun...ips patrolling over this area. Six ...ters—state-of-the-art machines, ...ing with rocket pods, miniguns, ...other tools for fighting drugs—...e been delivered to Colonel ...nez's National Police.

Maybe one of these lethal machines ...ing to stumble overhead, by ...ce, and the pilot is going to look ...wn and see two canoes filled with ...illas. Despite the U.S. pretense of ...t" getting involved in fighting ...g there is only one battlefield in ...ia—here, and the pilot is not going to ...to see if we are ELN guerrillas ...FARC guerrillas, or to inquire ...ether we take drug money, or to ask ...o is a civilian on board. He's just ...to lean over the cyclo, drop the ...down fast, and press a button.

Sooner or later, my new pet or another, a piece of the American drug war will come hurtling out of the sky looking for these men.

Around noon, we pull into the bank, camouflage the *yonsins*, and hike in single file through the forest.

The secret jungle hideout is first betrayed, as are all guerrilla camps, by the amount of laundry hanging around. After spotting a T-shirt and then a pair of socks, I walk on a bit and notice a pig and a few chickens. Finally, we come to a grove of wild plantain trees, with a handful of people loitering in the cool yellow shade. The guerrillas have assembled a few crude stools from logs, but this isn't the summer-complete-style of FARC. FARC tents have mosquito netting; the ELN tents are just black plastic sheets draped over ropes. The ELN kitchen tent looks deadly; FARC has brick ovens for baking fresh bread.

And instead of FARC's guerrilla girls in wet panties, I find a few men in sweat-soaked camouflage uniforms, somebody's girlfriend with a baby, and another 500,000 mosquitoes. There are only a half dozen fighters waiting in the camp. Each of them comes over and shakes the hand of the *comandante*, and his men, and then my hand, too.

Diego fetches a thermos of coffee, and we settle into the command tent and light two mosquito coils. I rest on a log, he sits on a battered camp chair. There are a couple of plywood tables holding the laptop, printer, TV, and VCR without which no guerrilla encampment is complete. Everything is run off a big truck battery, but later I hear a small generator rumbling in the bushes. We sip the piping-hot coffee.

"The worst enemy of the Colombian people is the oligarchy," Comandante Diego announces. *Sip.* "And then



...ed ...
United States ...
them ...

He tell... the U... fo... I was ... without victories ... them, all we want is ... "well consolidated ... a very consolidated ... project.

Diego talks to me about Colombia's oligarchy and about Colombia's grave crisis of inequality, about the need for schools, health clinics, employment, crop-substitution programs, agricultural-support programs, and infrastructure of all kinds; about the lack of "space" within Colombian politics (the ... formers have been subject to ... nation ever since Bolívar ... in the Street of Sighs); about the need for a new justice system, a new economy, a new military, a new social order, a grand political discussion involving all sectors of the society, and land redistribution in all parts of the country, not just some. Despite what the media says, they don't care much for Cuba. ("You have to respect Fidel, though," Diego offers. "That *hijo de puta* can work. He's like Yamil Cuter.") He ... Colombian narcotraffickers, Colombian ... patriots seeking Colombian ... capitalism. They ... the ... cover for a U.S. takeover of Colombia ... and will fight us ...

He ... with ... and ... him how the ... FARC. "We are not ... he immediately ... really. He ... ...

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...beans call kidnapping. The ELN ...ing a seventy-three-year-old ...mic context of the war." I ...ge. There will be no ...t. The leader is ...nausea on her face. ...nd the camp shak- ...mp, shaking the ...ir madness, the ...are socially progressive organizati... ...clapped by the egalitarian necess... ...utes. Everyone groans. There are ...tion by barking. The rules of war... ...the river. The party settle... ...the most basic grammar of ...

There weren't any dog... the FARC camps.

By midafternoon I am one l... ...with media relations, and I am fo... ...order marching and drillin... ...to attention, the red-and-black ... the fetish for insignia, are all m... ...step could be useful in jungle war... The Witchdoctor apparently feels ... ...el, and sweat in the heat. At the ... ...*Wash*.

We're all laughing when the ... rings out.

...total silence and stillness. The ... ...stand motionless, their eyes unfoc... ...seconds, Diego finally sp... ...but slowly, warily.

An hour later the Boatman ... ...lombia's worst kidnappers, an... Around five in the afternoon I

WRITE WHERE THINGS ARE HAPPENING

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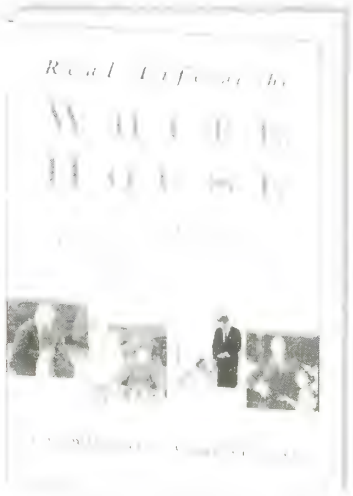
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A BRAVE OLD WORLD

Looking forward to a nineteenth-century utopia

By Russell Jacoby

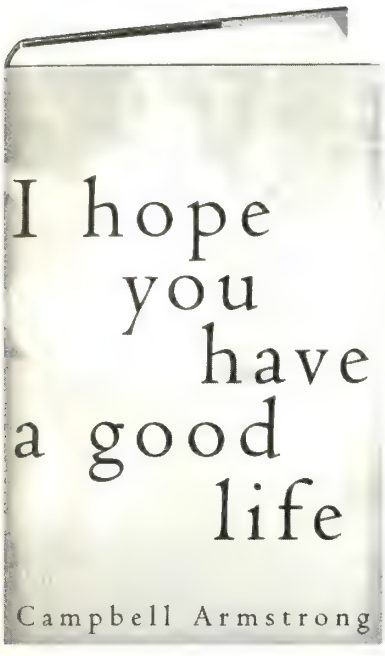


J

waking up. Several eminent thin
identified *Looking Backward* as se
only to Karl Marx's *Das Capital* i
worldwide influence. John De
then the most influential philoso
in America, believed that "what
Uncle Tom's Cabin was to the anti
ery movement" Bellamy's book w
"the shaping of popular opinion
new social order."

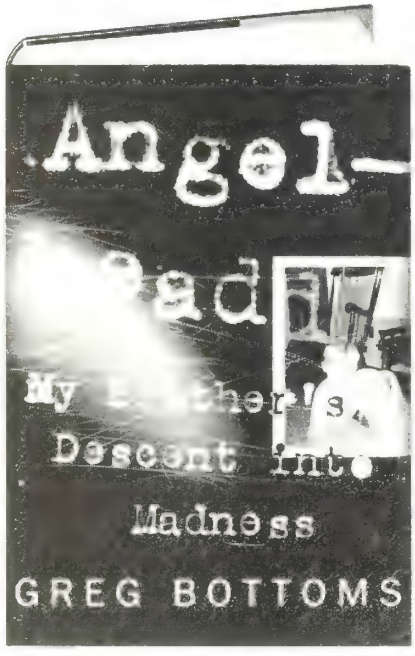
Now, in the very year to
which Bellamy projected his h
for humanity, the book no lo
strikes a chord. It has never bee
in print—today, in fact, there are
eral separate editions of *Looking B*
ward available, including two edi
recently put out by Applewood B
and Green Integer Books—bu
novel's audience consists most
graduate students in American l
ry, not the everyday citizens wh
the 1890's gathered in clubs to d
Bellamy's ideas. It is not simpl
familiar Rip Van Winkle devi

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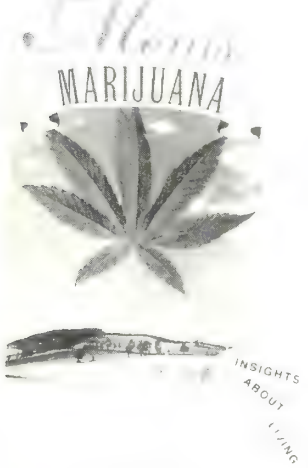
Eileen was 16 when she gave her newborn baby girl up for adoption. Forty-two years later, mother and daughter were reunited when both of them were fighting cancer. Their moving story is told by Eileen's ex-husband, the acclaimed writer Campbell Armstrong.

"**Powerful...heartbreaking...**a kind of ghost story, populated with real-life ghosts of old loves and obsessions."
—*Publishers Weekly*



Greg Bottoms brilliantly uses the power of language to comprehend the devastating effects of his brother's schizophrenia on their entire family.

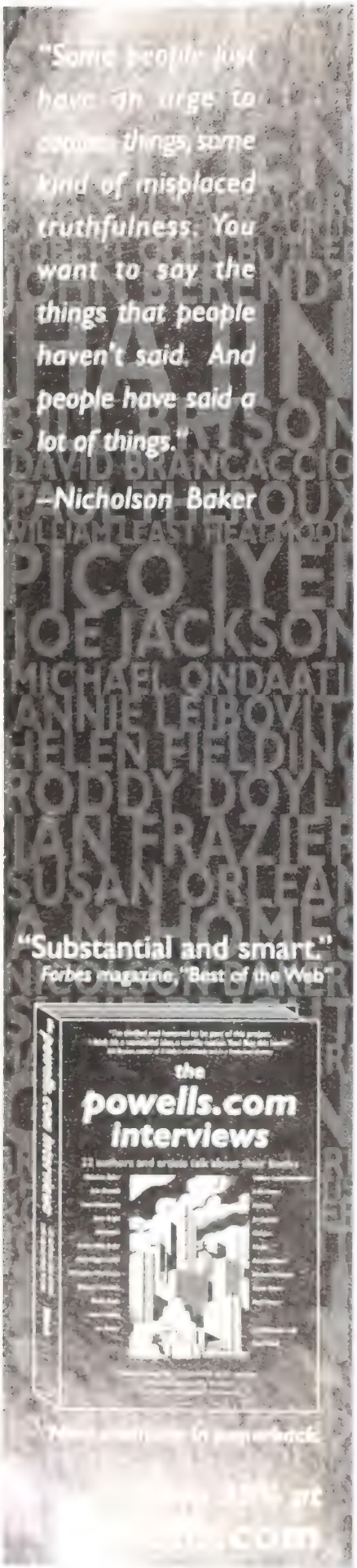
"*Angelhead* is a cleanly distilled story of profound family anguish. On every one of its two hundred pages there are sentences like arrows. The whole work has the beauty of hard, painful truth, arrived at through intelligence, art and compassion. **This is one of the most moving books I've read in a long, long time.**" —John Casey



This is Dan Shapiro's wry, often unexpectedly funny account of his battle with a life-threatening disease—in account which held radio audiences spellbound when he read from the book on NPR.

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—Andrew Weil, M.D.



[illegible] contemporary [illegible] sometimes [illegible] progress [illegible] thought I [illegible] [illegible] the chief motive [illegible] interest." West says of Edith [illegible] with whom he is projected [illegible] talks on love ("I could but offer me [illegible] would not have done had she been less beautiful"); to many, it is [illegible] optimism of *Looking Backward* that seems foolish. This response, however, may constitute a judgment not so much on Bellamy as on ourselves.

The new society that West wakes up to find in Boston does appear, to the twenty-first century eye, out-of-date in its details. As early as 1922, Lewis Mumford, still one of the book's most perceptive readers, wrote, in *The Story of Utopias*, that Bellamy had "outlined many parts of existence that has for us, in the twentieth century, become an actuality; a fact which makes us realize very poignantly the limitations of his utopia." Today we pride ourselves on having advanced far beyond Bellamy's vision of 2000—in technological terms, at least. Bellamy's wide-eyed speculations on long-established inventions such as skyscrapers, credit cards [illegible] was the first to use the term] and radios (citizens of his utopia listen to classical music over the telephone, a custom that astounds Julian West) seem mildly amusing. Yet it is the largesse and audacity of Bellamy's utopian vision that have tortured the worst. And why? Because we have become immeasurably more cynical about the prospects for human perfectibility. History has not [illegible] Bellamy's ideals so much as made them irrelevant. We no longer [illegible] alternatives to the prevailing consumerist society. Indeed, [illegible] to envision [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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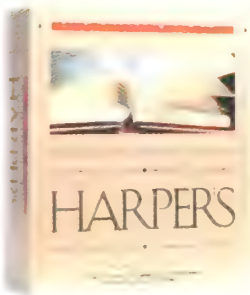
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Edward Penfield's "Christmas" p[illegible] created to promote the December 189[illegible] of Harper's Magazine. *Penfield (1866-[illegible] was one of America's most highly influ[illegible] illustrators and poster artists, widely c[illegible] ed with bringing abstraction to comm[illegible] art through boldly simplified shapes[illegible] eight-page full color portfolio of his p[illegible] tional posters for* Harper's *is featured [illegible] American Album.*

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humity. How can the weak be ned at the same level as the g? Leete upbraids him. "If you sick brother at home," he asks, d you feed him on less dainty and lodge and clothe him more ,, than yourself?" Of course not, s West, protesting that a "brotherd of blood" is not comparable to stract brotherly duty. "There s the nineteenth century!" exs Leete, adding that if he were er, in one sentence, the key to y in the year 2000, it is that arity" and "the brotherhood of " which to the nineteenth-cen and "were but fine phrases, ne, r thinking and feeling, ties as d as vital as physical fraternity." lamy's book both tapped into d utopian energies, and for the twenty years reformers and takers of every stripe turned to *g Backward* for inspiration. This to change after the First World when, in the words of the histo- ugen Weber, "the high hopes... nating in 1917 and 1918, were to be left unfulfilled." Karl heim's *Ideology and Utopia* appeared in the late 1920s, ar- ited a growing distrust of the pian instinct. For Mannheim the tellectual was, first and last, a skepwho cast a suspicious eye on grand schemes. His argument caught pirit of a century that was not o the utopian ideal; the dystopi- *84* and *Brave New World* are the that come to mind today when rd "utopia" is mentioned.

Anti-utopianism continues to sur- ir culture. Conventional is well olarly opinion posits that utopia concentration camps and that ans secretly dream of being guards. Robert Conquest, a chronicler of the Soviet ter- lauded by Gertrude Himmel telling the truth about "totalism and utopianism" in his book *Reflections on a Ravaged* y. And the final chapter of *The Tragedy*, by Martin Malia, an leading Soviet historian, is entitled "The Perverse Logic pia." Indeed, we now think of pian idealism as little more than a le to totalitarian murder. At n expression of utopian convictions will call forth a sneer from historians and social scientists. In the nineteenth century the anticipation of a future society of peace and equality was common; now it is almost extinct. Today few imagine that society can be fundamentally improved, and those who do are seen as at best deluded, at worst threatening.

Edward Bellamy was the gentlest of men. He started out as a lawyer, but, after his first case entailed the eviction of a widow for nonpayment of rent, he fled into journalism, writing muckraking editorials for the *New York Evening Post*. Later, when he had become a world-famous novelist, he preferred spending time with his family to carousing with fans. He is remembered as a carelessly dressed writer who liked to sit at home and read. Inordinately sensitive to the pain of others, he would have made a singularly ineffectual prison guard. In the sequel to *Looking Backward*, entitled *Equality*, we learn that the inhabitants of the new society have even renounced eating animal flesh. "Do you not understand," asks Dr. Leete of Julian, "how people came to regard 'the eating of their fellow-animals as a revolting practice, almost akin to cannibalism?' A sentiment that lends scant support to the idea that utopians are killers by nature.

Nor can Bellamy's vision of the future be said to have promoted totalitarianism. Rather it spurred modest reforms. Bellamy dreamed of such things as free education for all until the age of twenty-one and state ownership of banks—not exactly wild stuff. Franklin Delano Roosevelt played off of Bellamy's title for his own moderate proposals in his book *Looking Forward*. Nevertheless, today Bellamy is tarred with the very wide brush of menacing utopianism. In a recent essay in *The New Criterion*, the science writer Martin Gardner finds in *Looking Backward* a "description of a command economy that strongly resembles the Soviet Union under Lenin and Stalin."

Historically, utopians are as likely to be arrested as to do any arresting. Thomas More, who coined the term "utopia" from the Greek *ou-topos* and



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Communism,

dt, Isaiah Berlin,

problems, since

Wars I and II in the Balkans

old-fashioned power politics, only

the obvious, while known, is not al-

part of the violence and mass death

tributed to Communist states. Yet on

the balance sheet of global violence,

nationalistic, ethnic, and religious

movements appear well above even

quasi-utopian schemes. This is true

not simply for the distant past but for

yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Eth-

nic, religious, and national hatreds

continue to prove lethal. The separa-

tion of India and Pakistan; the cre-

ation of Bangladesh; the strife in Sri

Lanka, Rwanda, Israel, Sudan, In-

donesia, Northern Ireland—the list

is long and growing—derive solely

from religious and ethnic hostilities.

"What is the utopianism" King Ca-

nutehansult, in Thomas Mann's inge-

nuous, believed "that God perhaps

likes various forms of worship. . . .

[H]e was quite sure it was arrogant

folly for anyone to enforce conformi-

ty with his own beliefs by means of

threats or violence."

The utopian vision gets such a bad

scholars have come mainly from the

left (anti-utopianism being perhaps

past and its utopian hopes; hence

their vehemence and lack of perspec-

Friedrich

the species. Originally from

political matters, specifically

rise of totalitarianism. Isaiah B

expended much effort detect

the presumptions of utopianism

young people, Popper, Berlin,

Arendt had dabbled in leftism bu

mained immune to the appe

right-wing nationalism, racism,

religious sectarianism. As m

scholars they consequently fel

need to emphasize the dangers

latter, seeing them as too obvi

require elaboration.

For serious writers, communism

socialism had an intellectual

they could study its origins, dev

ment, and collapse. The mishm

of ideas that constituted Nazis

everyday racism offered much le

analyze. It would be exceptio

difficult to write a history of reli

intolerance, for instance; the su

lacks distinguished texts to p

Popper's *Open Society and Its En*

spends hundreds of pages on d

guished philosophers, but if he

included racism and ethnic fac

alism as "enemies," what thi

would he have studied? The c

entious reader of Popper would

to conclude that the threat to

society today comes from the

an ideas of Plato and Hegel.

these thinkers were ever much

or understood by people with p

French scholars have cranked

books on Hegel and Marx but

been noticeably reticent a

French fascism or the Vichy p

of collaboration with the Nazis.

scholarly approach has won the

Educated opinion targets utopia

is the primal threat to civiliz

A typical editorial in a local n

paper bemoans that the "concep

the utopians has bloodied the

in the 21st century. To make

point, the writer appeals to Wi

Golding, author of the dysto

Lord of the Flies who claimed h

cured of his visionary impulse

he accompanied British troo

liberating Bergen-Belsen, the

concentration camp. The tra

thought is familiar, but how d

bear on the more recent gl bal

flagrations? What, for example,

the collective wisdom of the

utopians have to say about Tuts

Hutus slaughtering each oth

…da' Probably nothing. And this …ter speaks to the immediate …s and future much more than …'s collectivization. A recent …y of global violence compiled … scholar Timothy D. Sisk finds …-three armed conflicts, all in… …ig disputes over "ethnicity, re…n, or language." Virtually all … characterized by collapsing … such as Somalia, or national …des such as that in Chechnya, …one by armed utopians.

I would be misleading to say that …e utopia presented in *Looking …ckward* is wholly appealing or …n. What Bellamy describes is …o much a superior alternative to …alism and consumerism as their …eosis. Monopolies, the scourge …llamy's day, have evolved in …ng *Backward* into one gargantu…te trust, which uses the nation's …ch to ensure perfect financial …ity for all. This system makes …n demands, of course. The idea …ng "mustered" into an "indus…rmy" at the age of twenty-one …working for "The Great Trust" … makes us want to take to the …s; and Dr. Leete's explanation …articipation in this army is "re…d as so absolutely natural and …able that the idea of its being …ulsory has ceased to be thought …" less than persuasive. More un…ng is Dr. Leete's celebration of …stitution of twenty-first-century …ge, in which "there are noth…ut love matches." For him, this …as not an increase in erotic joy, à …harles Fourier, but "that for the …me in human history the prin…of sexual selection, with its ten…e to preserve and transmit the …types of the race, and let the …or types drop out, has unhin…operation."

…her faults can be found. Bel…'s progressivism faltered on the …uestion (Julian West betrays no …on on realizing that his "man," …er, must have been killed in the …t obscured his basement room; …*Equality* blacks are allowed to …rticipate in the "industrial army" …pt separate from whites). The …is that Bellamy, like all of us, …creature of his time, and his



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update the summary of the
substance. If Bellamy were to
Bank." "Protestant Leader's Sl
Hold Imperils Ulster Peace A
ment," "11 Killed in Kashmir
battles," "Vast Trade in Force
bor," and "Britain Raises Ba
High Against the Asylum See
He would even find inspired
fessor Brown's successor o
grandeur of the technological
except one fundamental thin
utopian vision that things m
must—one day change is gone

Bellamy never made it t
twentieth century, he died
of tuberculosis, at the age of
eight. Two years later, an
youthful writer died who had
on utopia. In most respects,
Wilde and Edward Bellamy h
the in common, one attended
ties, the other to art; one was
et family man, the oth
flamboyant bohemian. Exac
this reason, however, it is t
that on one point they conv
"A map of the world that d
include utopia," wrote Wil
not worth even glancing at,
leaves out the one country at
Humanity is always landing."

Today, these sentiments
knowing smiles. With a che
derstanding of history, we
utopian visionaries as dan
cranks. This has allowed us to
a convenient cynicism, a feeli
the best we can do is to teath
nists. Edward Bellamy may st
something to offer: a belief,
constitutes the essence of the
an spirit, that inequality and
are not inherent to the
condition, that a more humar
ety is possible. If that spirit is
universally derided nowadays,
because we are smar
because we are narrower—an
restricted. How is it that the n
of utopia was more obvious
"benighted" nineteenth c
than in our dazzling twenty-fi

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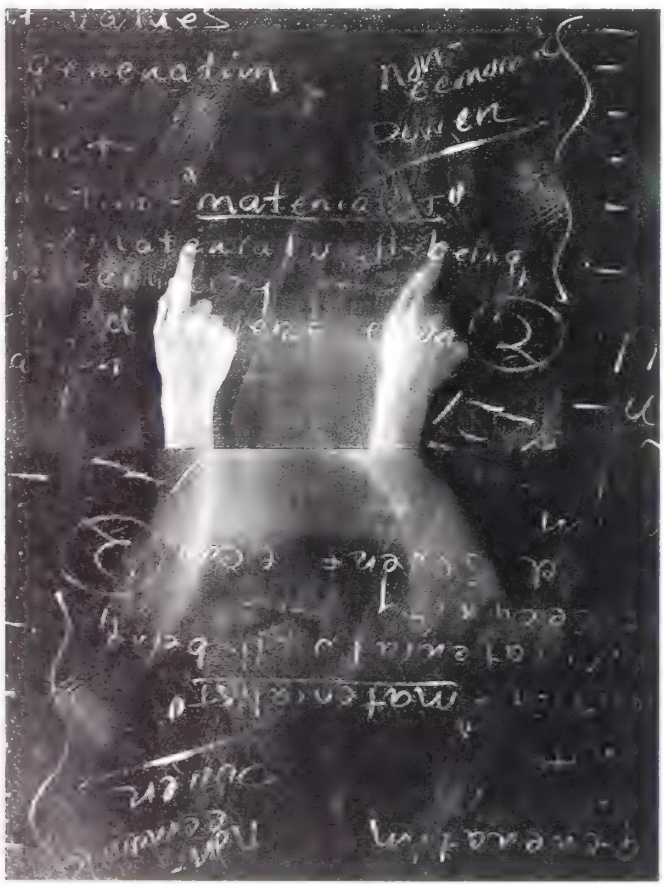
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THE FUTURE JOURNAL

By J. Robert Lennon

I



there was no reason to
any feathers by makin
deal of it. Also, my pr
of encouraging extra
reading tended to mak
conscious those stu
who didn't like to read
while we were on the
feet, from now on we'
be referring to stude
"learners" and to teach
"facilitators," at the re
of the parents' associa
I tried not to cry right t
and in fact I made it
the parking lot bef
broke down, flingin
empty briefcase at m
and cursing the day Ca
born while tears stre
down my face. I cry
for a minute. I'm not ash
of this.

Once I'd caught
breath I picked up my
case and got in behin
wheel. It's a little
Volkswagen Golf, red.
bumper sticker depic
businessman smugly
tering into a cellular
I left a message reading
K LATER! A few people
honked at me after reading it, o
en me the finger. Let them! I
am not afraid to voice my opinio
was noon, and I was hungry. My
was empty because I had
eating my lunch during Carl's

, and I had left the lunch, large-
ı iten, on the break-room table
_ ran out. It was hot, there was
ı week before school was to start
(of the custodians were hang-
ound in the parking lot nearby,
ıg, though Carl had insisted
t ll smoking take place off the
(l grounds. Perhaps the rule
ı n't take full effect until classes
: Anyway, it wasn't my prob-
. et fired, gentlemen, if you wish!
lung cancer!

ıed in my slacks pocket for my
s id started the Golf. Hot air blew
r face and the radio blared show
(*South Pacific*. I would be playing
: t in the pit band up at the high
(this fall, and there was no rea-
put off getting ready. But sud-
I he musical, all musicals, seemed
l y and pointless. I switched it
3 u're supposed to take the tape
f the capstan can permanently
g the pinch roller, creating flut-
w I wow—but for the moment I
n care. I rolled up the windows
ı rned the fan on high.

F k! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!" I shout-

c ve down to the strip and got in
Wendy's. Behind me was an
ı ous Oldsmobile containing
appeared to be two identical
p ale, heavy, large-headed, with
p blond hair and gigantic jaws
l ecks. I studied them in the
v w. The driver was alert and
ı nd blazingly illuminated by af-
ı n sun. The passenger wore a
p and his head hung low, so
ı s entire face was deeply shad-
ı e seemed to be asleep. I'm no
ı se cosmologist, but there cer-
d seemed to be a yin-yang thing
ı n here: the driver bright, dry,
his passenger dark and passive
c mp. Which was I?

' passenger, of course. The pas-
s senger, laboring in darkness,
e gnized and misunderstood, wet
l weat, as the AC seemed to be
ı tely broken), subject to the
ı of a higher and utterly arbitrary
ı ty. To think that I just sat there
d g at Carl, taking it! Just taking
began to feel shaky all over again
keaded the steering wheel. Sticky
k tuff came off it and rolled itself
ı tle cigars under my hands. Evo-
lution, indeed. How very smug of me, of all of us, to imagine there was constant and inevitable movement toward greater intelligence, efficiency, physical perfection!

Pretty soon my turn came. I accepted the food with a nod. Then I realized that I had no money.

"Do you take checks?" I asked the kid.

"Checks?"

I nodded.

"Let me talk to my manager."

Like all fast-food managers, this one was slight of stature and frowned with a practiced authority. He had the requisite small black mustache. "What seems to be the trouble?"

"I'm sorry," I said. "I'm out of money. I just realized. The check is local, it's all current, I'll give you my driver's license . . ." I handed him the license, and he looked from it to me four or five times, his frown deepening. At last he said, "We don't normally do this, but I'll make an exception."

Whew! I borrowed a pen from the kid and opened my checkbook. "Wendy's," I wrote in the PAY TO line. Somehow, that act made me sadder than anything that had happened yet that day. Behind me, yang honked. I waved and pulled around to the lot.

When I was finished with my Cajun chicken sandwich and Frosty I closed my eyes and tried to meditate. How hard could it be? I thought. I took off my shoes and pushed the seat back and crossed my legs, then placed my hands palms up on my knees. I said, "Ummm . . . ," which did not sound quite right. I pictured a big naked bald man doing the same thing. In a little while a feeling of peace and well-being washed over me. Soon I was dreaming: I was a medicine ball, like the one they had in the school gym, simultaneously heavy and buoyant, girded by flexible metal rods. The children cheered as they propelled me through the air!

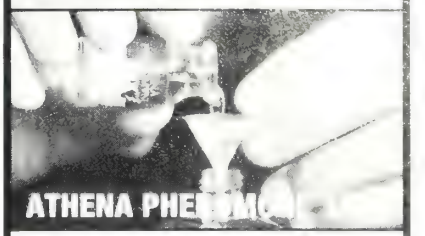
I woke to a tap. It was a girl wearing a Wendy's hat. The atmosphere inside the car was stifling. I rolled down the window and the air billowed out. "Yes?"

"They sent me out to see if you were all right."

"I'm fine."

"They said I should tell you no sleeping in the parking lot."

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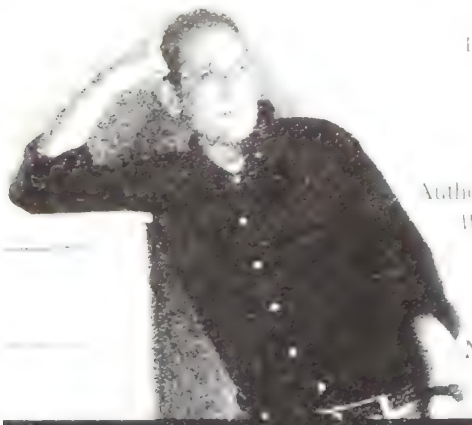
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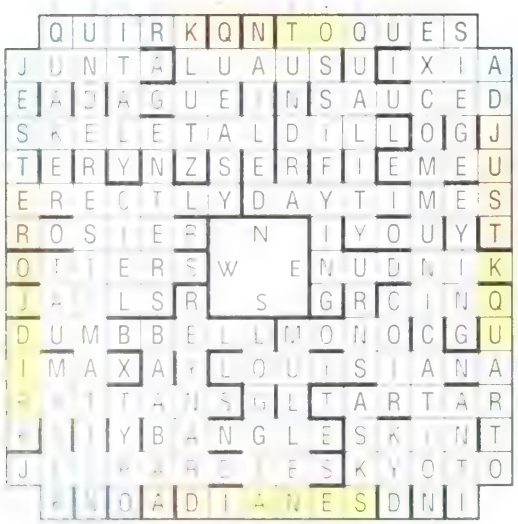
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"Okay." I looked at the time
clarity. How'd that happen?"
I pulled out onto
street.

I didn't want to slink back
ty Shaver Elementary with my
tween my legs. Besides, I had
to do; my plan had been to work
bulletin board all day. I was go
drive Gwen home, but she
lives very close to the school an
comfortably walk, especially on
sunny day like this. So, exile
Wendy's, I drove around, look
hidden neighborhoods I'd nev
before. In a hilly town like our
places really exist, carved out of
tainsides or tucked away behind
of trees. But my search was in
had found them all long ago.
pointed, I tooled around on p
country roads for fifteen minute
until one led me to Route 13,
gave way to the Southern T
pressway. I revved it up to
and the whole car hummed, or
shuddered. I switched the radi
on and began to sing. What in
name was I doing? The road uns
before me like a medieval deer
king of my consciousness had s

I drove several hours until
dipped into my path, then I sw
my glasses for the prescription
that were stashed in the glov
That was better: the mountai
highways and clouds all sharpe
browned, as if they'd just come
the oven. After a couple of
pulled over and got on the
Gwen, still at school.

"I was just about to leave.
are you?" In the background
hear a ditto machine, which
age of electronic reproduction
ty Shaver Elementary still main
Only a few ancient teachers
looked as they were on the sm
of fresh-baked cookies lace
acetone.

"That isn't important," I s
portantly. "I just want to tel
won't be back for dinner toni
"Really? Why not?"
"It isn't important."
"Can I tell you something? A
idea I had." Or is this a bad tim
"No, now is just fine," I said
confidant. I was a little bit put of

ince of my dismissal. Couldn't
ave pressed the issue.' But that
s not her way. You're in imagine
delighted I was to find her, five
after my divorce, trying to lift a
ired desk-chair-combo thing into
unk of her car out in the BSE
g lot. Can I say that she is beau-
Can I mention her golden tress-
too large face, her tall woman's
nscious stoop' I had thought I
never make love to a woman

r twenty or so thin bangles
d as she settled herself in the
l office; I could imagine her hips
g on the simulated-woodgrain
of the buffet table where copies
collated, and where people
on the phone. She said, "This
the year 2000 and all, I was
ng about how everybody's
ng 'bout the future? You know,
the Internet and everything, it's
ture, future, future."
's."
I'm going to ask the kids to
the future! First they'll mix up
own colors and put them in Tup-
perware and make up names for them, Millennium Red or Future Blue or some such happy horseshit"—and here I noticed that the dittoing had stopped, and that Gwen was now alone in the copy room, else she would not have said *horseshit*—"and those'll be the colors they use all year. And then I'll ask them to paint the future. Like what the buildings will look like, and the people, and the trees and plants and insects . . ."

"Probably they'll all be dead."

She tsked. "That's exactly why I am not giving you this assignment, Luther, because you have no hope. But the good thing is, whenever I run out of ideas I can just whip out the whole future theme and make them paint that. And maybe we can do a storybook like get Mrs. Greitz to have them write a futuristic story together . . ."

"Hah! Good luck!" I said.

"—and then in my classes we can illustrate it, with our fancy new colors and all that. I wonder if it's possible to get metallic paint? Since you know there are metallic crayons . . ."

She went on for a while in this vein, and I [illegible] the cleverness I [illegible] about my [illegible] that morning. How [illegible] woman, that [illegible] skin so [illegible] river? And how was it that my car was forever [illegible] flotsam' I thought. The hell with it all!

". . . So do you like it?"

"I do. Like all your ideas, it is brilliant. But listen . . ."

"Oh! Maybe you can help me with reading and science! You can have them read a science-fiction book, and teach them about rocketry or computers!"

"Listen, I have to tell you something."

A silence. "What already?"

"I'm quitting. I'm not coming back to work."

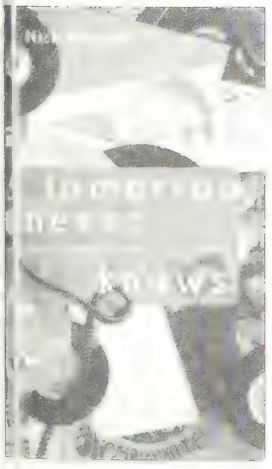
She laughed. "Whyever not?"

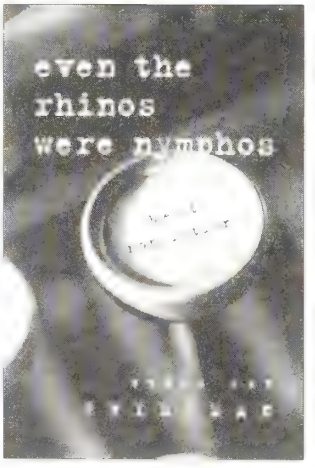
"You can ask Carl. Tell him I quit. Tell him no hard feelings. He'll know why."

More silence. "You're serious?"

"Yes."

ROCK! DRUGS! RHINOS! NYMPHOS!





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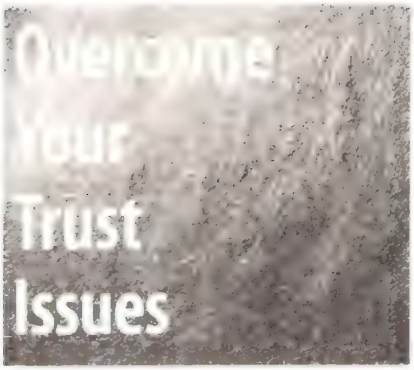
"Bruce Jay Friedman is a genius. And I know about [illegible] I've spent a lot of time with Bruce Jay Friedman [illegible] in the middle of the night when we were all geniuses. But Bruce Jay—he's a genius in the daytime."—P[illegible]

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I'd be back
you tell Carl it's over.

I interrupted. I did not feel the kind of gloss-the-personal-triumph I'd hoped for. And when I turned and regarded the Civic it seemed a trifle of a car, a mere toy incapable of taking me anywhere, literally and metaphorically. Yet I climbed in. I had no choice.

The expressway emptied onto Route 30 and Pennsylvania, then quickly Ohio. More hours passed. It got to be lunch and dinnertime. I ate at another Wendy's, exactly what I'd eaten for lunch. It seems to me that if you eat something once in a day it is simple nourishment, but if you eat the same thing twice it is a motif. As I polished off the last of the frosty and endured the sudden headache, I found myself cheered. A motif! I stopped in the men's room (surprisingly clean) and used a match from the box I habitually carry to erase all evidence of my efforts. This small act of propriety and self-negation felt right on the money. So did quitting. It was all for the best: removing myself from the future. I was a throwback, a species meant to atrophy. Back on the road, fully warmed up in the *South Pacific* (now dormant), I began to sing in the operatic style, narrating my day in rhymed couplets:

> I traded in my ring with Del
> I'm gonna [illegible] on a wall.
> [illegible] I'll never see that
> [illegible] the beach photo

Mundane details took on ominous musical meaning. The major players [illegible] moldy stew, holding tones in a minor key for Carl, a [illegible] for Gwen, a repeating tritone (or "devil's interval") for me. [illegible] I passed the last half [illegible] and eats. I the high [illegible] to the [illegible] specifically. [illegible] my mouth there was [illegible] creation.

[illegible] yet dark. I motored the [illegible] breath of summer; [illegible] perpetuate

[illegible] adults congregated at the [illegible] driveways, anticipating the [illegible] absence of the children. Somew[illegible] I supposed, teachers were gr[illegible] tense, worrying about guns and [illegible] and standardized tests. Not me!

Once I'd found the house I w[illegible] I parked across the street. For [illegible] minutes I sat in the car, reconnoi[illegible] A white mock Tudor with an ap[illegible] sculpted yews. In a patch around [illegible] wood tree, tiger lilies grew impo[illegible] tall. A cat sat in a window, st[illegible] Nobody seemed to be home, t[illegible] the garage was open and toys [illegible] out. I reswitched eyeglasses and cl[illegible] out and stretched and unstuck m[illegible] and pants from my back. My n[illegible] was still tightly knotted: duh! I lo[illegible] it and instantly felt ten times be[illegible] crossed the street and yard and [illegible] in the unlocked front door.

"Hello!" I called out. A thu[illegible] cat jumping down from the [illegible] scratched its head. It was a ne[illegible] barely past kittenhood; the old ca[illegible] have died. No, here he came, l[illegible] ing along like a sack of potti[illegible] with legs, mewling in a very [illegible] way. I couldn't stand cats, but [illegible] subtle solidarity with these two [illegible] soldiers. I went to the kitchen an[illegible] their bowls from a large glass ja[illegible] ously bought from some specialt[illegible] (with a metal scoop inside, no [illegible] then I opened a cold beer and sa[illegible] to drink it. The clock read eig[illegible] teen. People were finishing the [illegible] ners out and heading home ... b[illegible] pass the ice-cream stand ... t[illegible] licking their soft serve and wa[illegible] cars speed by ...

The beer went straight to m[illegible] I stood, swooning, and mad[illegible] rounds of the first floor. It wa[illegible] tidy, but not the kind of tidy th[illegible] could say is concealing some si[illegible] sonal shortcoming. The televisi[illegible] discreetly hidden in a painte[illegible] cabinet, but the compact discs [illegible] ly pop) were right out in plai[illegible] Books and magazines were at ri[illegible] gles neither to one another nor [illegible] tables they lay open upon. The [illegible] not fanned in an attractive p[illegible] An empty tumbler, encrusted w[illegible] residue of some drink, stood [illegible] floor beside an easy chair. I pick[illegible] and gave it a whiff. Fruit sm[illegible] Banana, strawberry, something

lack into the depression it had
on the carpet.
was dark outside now, the VCR
:52. I took a deep breath and
pstairs. A bathroom (more mag-
, a little boys' room (bunk beds,
t of sports equipment and plas-
ks). The master bedroom, a lit-
lier than I might have chosen
self and Gwen, but comfy-look-
vent in and sat on the bed. Yes:
did they get this wonderful com-
Out in the hall again—I peeked
linen closet and at last entered
-I's room. Perfect. Storybooks
here, stickers, a transparent plas-
se containing Smarties, fruit-
d lipstick, an electronic game,
ring of discarded keys, perhaps
in all. The bed was made and
back, the pillow fluffed, a pink
own casually tossed over the post,
or slumber. I sat down on the
. It creaked. Excellent. No
nds sneaking in here at night a
ars down the road. I closed my
d smelled the room's stale sweaty
com scent. The front-door latch
d. I remembered my empty beer
and felt a moment of panic, but
when I found it in my hand.
tly, I got up and shut the bed-
loor. I returned to my place on
d. A television switched on
tairs. Laughter, the whining of
ys. Footsteps sounded on the
nd hallway, and my heart quick-
The boys entered their room,
n tow. Honest-to-God twins, no
drugs, three years old. The fa-
ressed them, led them to the
om, supervised the brushing of
th, read them books in bed. A
her, by the sound of it. He left,
boys giggled and talked unin-
ly until they slept.
In there was only the television
familiar voice said, "Anna, why
you go get your jammers on?"
I stay up?"
a little while."
t footsteps skipped every other
he door opened.
gasped but didn't cry out. I had
ger to my lips. Her hair was
hanging free, fine and light,
clearly less fine and light than
was. She stepped in and shut
or.
Daddy," she whispered.

"Howdy," I said.

Anna came to me and let me hug her. I stifled a sigh. She said, "Why are you here?"

"I wanted to see you."

She frowned. "You can't come out."

"I know. Will they come in?"

"No. I'm a light sleeper. Remember? I get goodnight kisses before I go to my room."

My God. "Yes, I remember," I said.

She shook her head, awfully ruefully for a ten-year-old. She said, "I have to go down." She took the nightgown off the bedpost, looked around the room, and entered the cluttered closet. I heard clothes sliding around on their hangers, and her small body brushing against the hollow-core doors. Whence came this shyness? I would never again dress her for school, I realized. When she came out she seemed to be glowing. I suppose it was the light, what there was of it from the street.

"You look like an angel," I said.

"*Whisper.*"

I said it again, quiet this time.

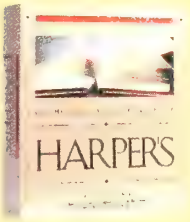
She went downstairs. "Comfy-girl," said her stepfather. "Come," said my ex-wife. To the sofa? They watched television for a long time. Please, Anna, I thought, don't fall asleep; don't let them carry you up here. Sitting on her bed, it was easy to remember being her age, being in my room, the only place I truly liked, where nobody would bother me and where all my books were. Weather! I loved weather; I had dozens of books on the subject. I made my own hygrometer and barometer, which were fastened to a ledge outside my window. I kept careful records of temperature and pressure and wind speed. When I told my fourth-grade teacher, he said, "Well, Luther, if your instruments are right up against the house, none of the readings will be accurate. A house exudes heat and blocks the wind." He was right. I put my notebooks away but left the instruments outside, where they remained until they were blown into the shrubs during a freak summer windstorm. Why was I so sensitive? Why did I give up, give in, so easily? I could pay a shrink a small fortune to find out, but I never will.

Anna came back. The Winnie the Pooh clock on her desk read quartet to nine. I had given the clock to her, for one birthday or another.

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bed beside

then my record has
been unblemished. "But we can't live
best thing in our lives, and we love
gether. I

ied and said, "I'll be

I pulled my damp hand out of hers.
silent. In the hall,
and little light. The
ut. I want-
rse I didn't. That is
inced
right.
ighbor-
been

I

hirty in the
but I
were
d people

When I was nearly home I
thinking that I could use Gwen
after all. I could have my student
What will your life be like tom
To give them a quick success,
them motivated. Then the nex
it would be: What will your life
next week? And then: Next
tv years? Fifty? What will you
dren, your grandchildren, you
great-great-great-grandchildr
Who will they be? Maybe I w
nal I could follow the lives
all kinds of outlandish predictio
would amuse and delight the c
being.

I parked outside Gwen's co
let myself in with my key. She
for us: a trip, a dip in the lak
mantic dinner. I slid into bed
me.

"Hmm? What time is it?"

"Almost six," I whispered.

hot grass that had grown her

"Just now."

"Luther. Where the hell we

stead, I said, "You didn't really
what I asked you to tell Carl, d

"No, that. That I quit."

"Luther, you *asked* me to."

"You don't mean you told

"I did what you asked."

were crossed over her lovely
What could I do? I burst in
"Oh God," I said. "What have
I fell against her: how wonder
of my lover! A question torme
—but I hel

CLASSIFIED

'll, baby," she said, stroking my
h "No, I'm sorry, I was kidding
y- didn't say anything at all to
r nothing at all. No, no . . ."
ard the words, sure. But I kept on
g and let her rock me until her
ll urt too much and she had to
. For a time, while she show-
was alone in her bed. Posters
l the walls; she'd had them since
. Monet, French movies, kitty-
he woman I love has cat posters,
loud. I heard the water turn off,
e bright flash of robe as she
in the hall. By the time she re-
with the paper I was ready to
t what had happened. ■

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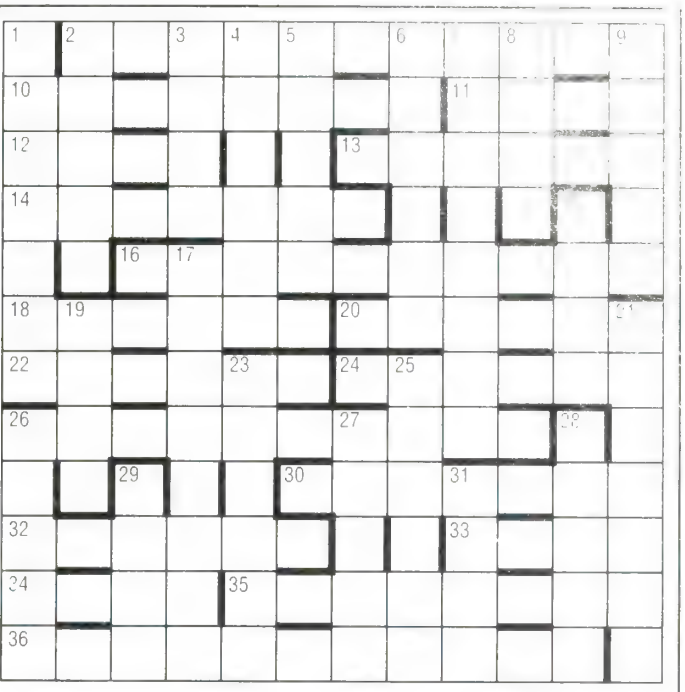
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PUZZLE



Electricity

by Richard E. Maltby Jr.

This puzzle's diagram suffers from 2 Across 10 across. As a result, half the answers are to be entered normally and half are not.

Answers include four proper names, one of which an acronym. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 84.

Across

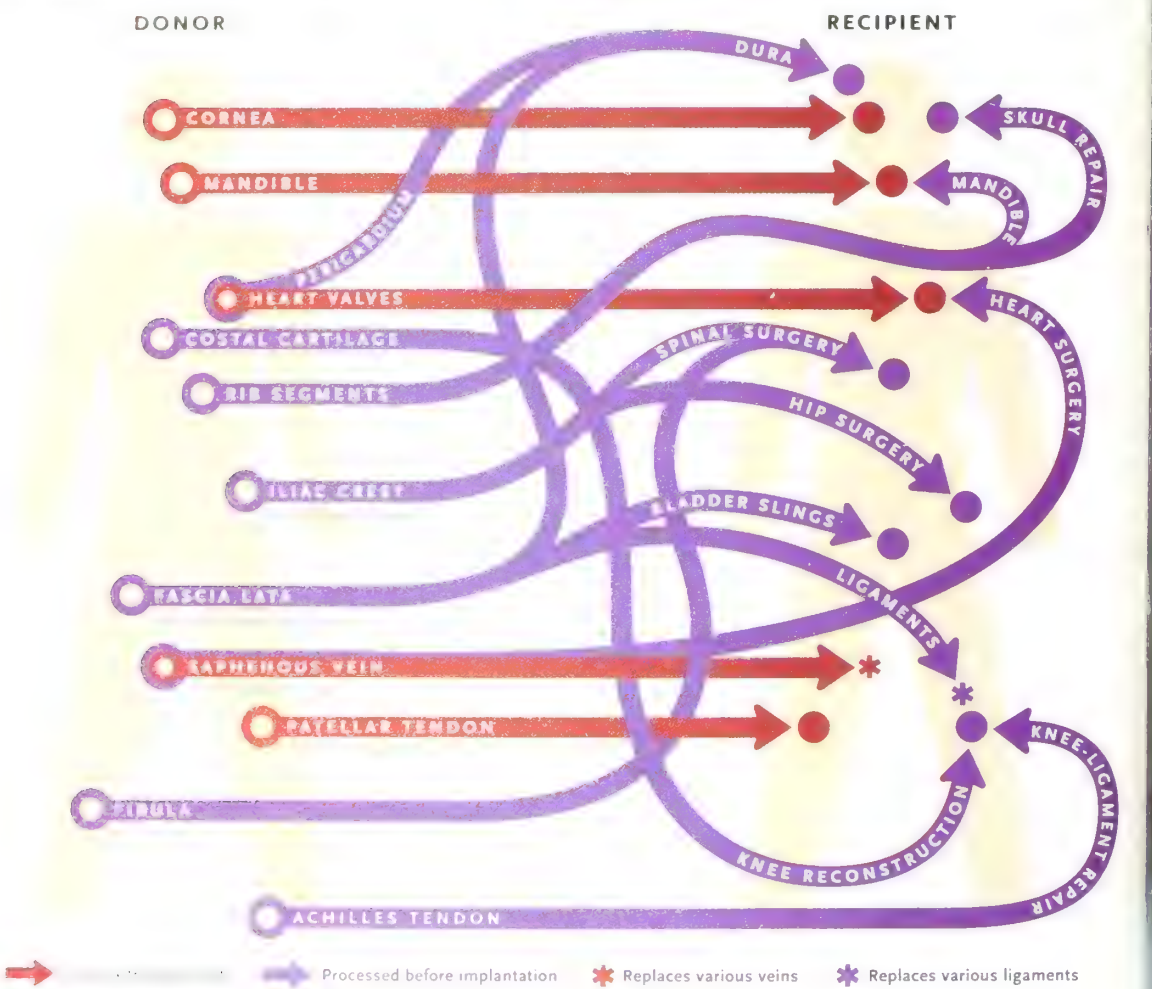
2 *see instructions* (11)
10 *see instructions* (8)
11 In an alliance, there's no holding back thanks (4)
12 Seasoned fellow? (4)
13 With airman flying around, boat slips in here (6)
14 It's a case where a phone operator gets called back in pain (7)
16 Where you're in the thick of things, put "ess" among "queues"? (10)
18. One hundred, one hundred fifty—excellent for eavesdropper! (6)
20 What a highwayman does with a year left, certainly (6)
22 There's little interest in "Sunrise, Sunset" segment—fine (6)
24 "Clover" can become "closer" (6)
26 Male youth tend to call the shots (10)
30 Leading though fancy cry (7)
32 Real SS troops around beams (6)
33 Axe bills at hearing (4)
34 Big rock name in *Kent* (4)
35 Entryway dogs and cats cross the wrong way (8)
36 Diasporas say bad things about former Iranians, I hear (11)

Down

1 Worn out, the woman's seated (7)
2. *Time* intervenes in two articles and a letter from a sorority (5)
3 Helps a friend (4)
4 Rousing heat in the hundred I raced in the wrong direction (6)
5. Prosecutor covering railroad station (5)
6. Material in a record (current one) (6)
7. Food wrapper thrown out in littoral (8)
8. Acne one got from pasta (4)
9. Bit of low-class language? (5)
15 Sweetheart does, when talking (4)
17 Losing Z's—that's one spooky mansion (8)
19. Turner up of a compulsion (4)
21. Little flier—it's there for rigging light (7)
23 Sole portions sounded out in Eliot (6)
25 Persia negotiated bringing talk up (6)
26. Sweeps America into drunken fantasies (5)
27 Other possible product of singultus spasm? (5)
28. Give up on audio broadcast (5)
29 Model sub (4)
31 Soldier's kit in disarray (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Electricity," *Harper's Magazine*, [illegible] by January 15. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entrants must be [illegible] years of age. The first three correct solutions opened at random will receive one-year subscriptions to *Harper's Magazine*. Winners will be printed in the February 2001 issue. Winners of the October puzzle, "Input," are Julia Marshall, Montreal, Quebec; Mary Stranik, Carmel, Indiana; and Sue Unterman, Northridge, California.

CHOICE CUTS



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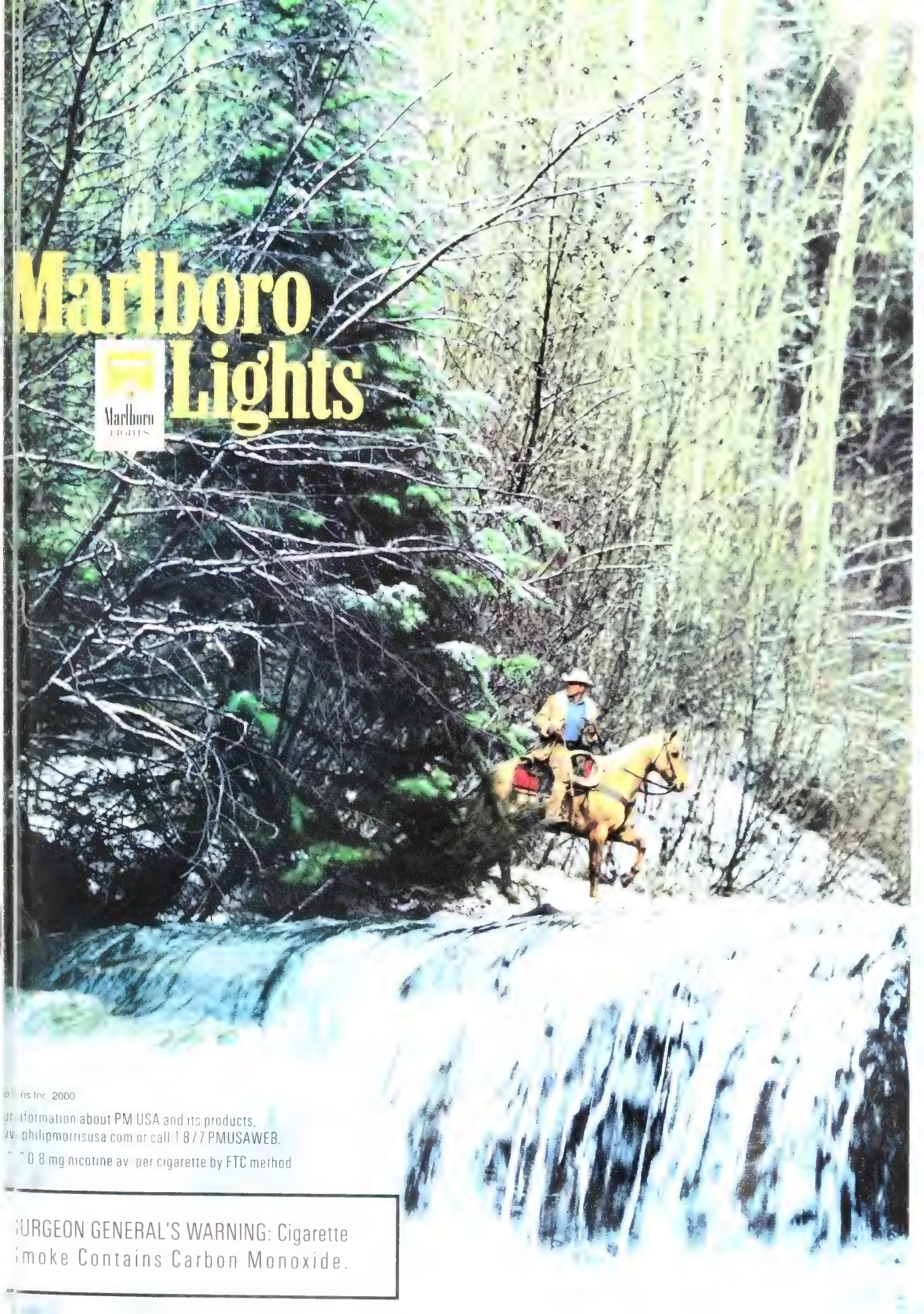
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